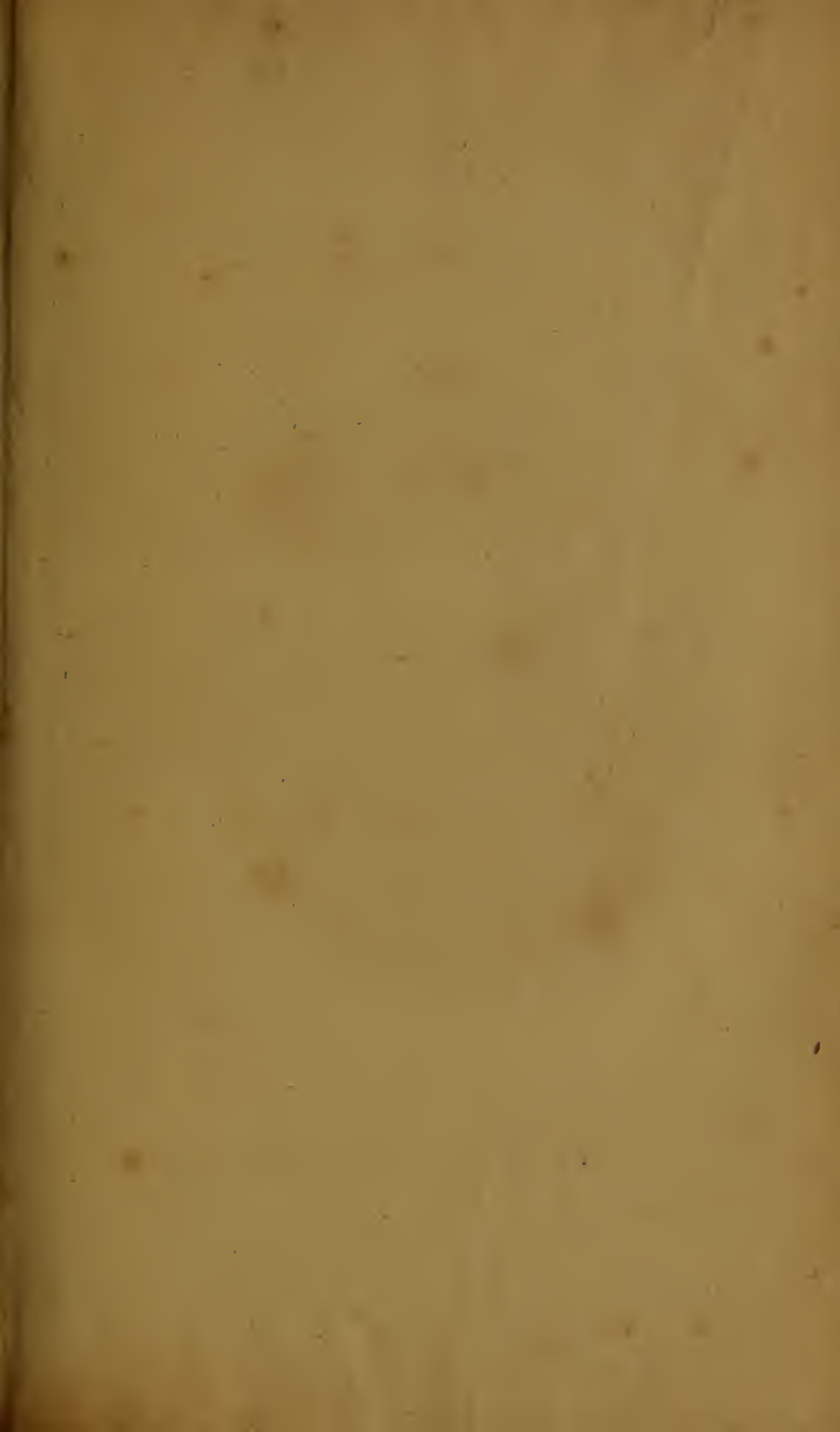




Thomas F. Torrance

SCS # 1228a









*Spence, sc.*

*Thomas Watson?  
Minister of S.<sup>t</sup> Stephens, Walbrook, — London?*

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AND  
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*By the Rev. THOMAS WATSON,*  
Formerly Minister at St. Stephen's, Walbrook, London.

---

*Recommended to Masters of Families, and Others, by Several Ministers*

---

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I

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HE BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH. HEB. xii. 4.

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T O T H E  
R E A D E R.

**T**HES E catechetical Lectures of the late Reverend Mr. THOMAS WATSON, all but one, written with his own hand, I have read over, together with some Sermons annexed to them; and since my testimony is desired concerning them, I do hereby declare, that (though I will not undertake to justify every expression or sentence in them, or in any human writing,) I find them, in the main, agreeable to the doctrinal articles of this Church, and unto the Westminster Assembly's Confession of Faith and Catechisms: and I believe, that, through the blessing of God, they may be profitable unto the edification of all that read them, with an honest desire to know and do the will of God; for certainly there are many excellent things in them, which, if they meet with a well disposed serious mind, are very apt to have a good effect upon it; and if it prove otherwise with any that happen to read this book, it will be their own fault more than the book's. Most writers have different styles; and it is well known that Mr. Watson had one peculiar to himself, which yet hath found good acceptance with, and has been useful unto serious people; and I hope this (by reason of the great variety of excellent matter) may be more generally useful than any other thing he ever wrote. I little doubt but every sober Christian will be of this mind, after he has read his lectures on God's attributes, the ten commandments, Lord's prayer, &c. I sincerely profess, I have no other end in giving this testimony of this book, but thereby to serve the common good of Christ's church, and not the private interest of any person or party in the world: if my conscience did not bear me witness, that this book may be useful to that excellent end, no man should ever have prevailed with me, thus to prefix my testimony and name to it. That it may answer the main end for which it was at first written by the author, (whom I always took to be a grave, serious, modest, good man) and for which, I hope, it is now published, to wit, the edification of the church of Christ in faith, holiness, and comfort, is the hearty desire of one of the meanest servants of our most blessed LORD JESUS.

WILLIAM LORIMER.

WE whose names are subscribed, having seen the testimony of our worthy brother, Mr. William Lorimer, after his perusal of this book, doubt not but it may be of use to many; as the former writings of Mr. Thomas Watson have been; and, with that desire and hope, we recommend it to the masters of families and others.

*William Bates,  
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A  
SHORT ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
AUTHOR.

---

IT is sufficiently known to all that have any acquaintance with the histories of the church, that many valuable and useful ministers were ejected for non-conformity, by the act of uniformity in the reign of King Charles II. which took place, August 24th, 1662. Among others, the Reverend Mr. THOMAS WATSON was ejected from his charge, at St. Stephen's, Walbrook, London; whose character is given by the Reverend Dr. Edmond Calamy, in his Abridgments, Vol. II. p. 37; and is as follows:

“ From St. Stephen's, Walbrook. Mr. Thomas Watson; he was of Emanuel College in Cambridge, where he was noted for being a hard student; one so well known in the city, viz. London, for his piety and usefulness, that though he was singled out by the Friendly Debate, he yet carried a general respect for all sober persons along with him to his grave. A memorable passage, which I have from good hands, must not be passed by: When Mr. Watson was in the pulpit, on a lecture-day, before the Bartholomew act took place, among other hearers, there came in that Reverend and learned Prelate, Bishop Richardson, who was so well pleased with his sermon, but especially with his prayer after it, that he followed him home, to give him thanks, and earnestly desired a copy of his prayer. Alas! said Mr. Watson, that is what I cannot give; for I do not use to pen my prayers; it was no studied thing, but uttered as God enabled me from the abundance of my heart and affections, *pro re nata*. Upon which the good Bishop went away, wondering that any man could pray in that manner, *extempore*. After his ejection, he continued in the exercise of the ministry in the city, as providence gave opportunity, for many years: but his strength wearing away he retired into Essex, and there died suddenly, in his closet, at prayer.”





A  
PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE

TO

CATECHISING.

COL. i. 23.

*If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled.*

**I**NTENDING the next Lord's day to enter upon the work of catechising, it will not be amiss to give you this preliminary discourse, as preparatory to it; shewing you how needful it is for Christians to be well instructed in the grounds of religion. 'If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled,'—Two propositions:

*First*, It is the duty of Christians to be settled in the doctrine of faith.

*Second*, The best way for Christians to be settled, is to be well grounded.

DOCT. I. *That it is the duty of Christians to be settled in the doctrine of faith.* It is the apostle's prayer, 1 Pet. v. 10. 'The God of all grace, stablish, strengthen, settle you.' That they might not be meteors in the air, but fixed stars. The apostle Jude speaks of 'wandering stars,' verse 13. They are called wandering stars, because, as Aristotle saith, "They do leap up and down, and wander into several parts of the heaven; and being but dry exhalations, not made of that pure celestial matter as the fixed stars are, they often fall to the earth." Now, such as are not settled in religion, will, at one time or other, prove wandering stars; they will lose their former strictness, and wander from one opinion to another. Such as are unsettled are of the tribe of Reuben, 'unstable as water,' Gen. xlix. 4. like a ship without ballast, overturned with every wind of doctrine. Beza writes of one Belsæsius, whose religion changed as the moon. The Arians had every year a new faith. These are not pillars in the temple of God, but reeds shaken every way. The apostle calls them 'damnable heresies,' 2 Pet. ii. 1. A man may go to hell as well for heresy as adultery. To be unsettled in religion, argues want of judgment: if their heads were not giddy, they would not reel so fast from one opinion to another. It argues lightness: feathers will be

blown every way; so will feathery Christians: *Triticum non rapit ventus inanes palæ jactantur*, Cypr. Therefore such are compared to children, Eph. iv. 14. 'That we be no more children, tossed to and fro.' Children are fickle, sometimes of one mind, sometimes of another; nothing pleases them long: so unsettled Christians are childish; those truths they embrace at one time, they reject at another; sometimes they like the Protestant religion, and soon after they have a good mind to turn Papists. Now, that you may labour to be settled, (as Ignatius) in the faith, in unsettled times of settled judgments.

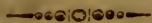
1. It is the great end of the word preached, to bring us to a settlement in religion: Eph. iv. 11, 13. 'And he gave some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers, for the edifying of the body of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children.' The word is called an hammer, Jer. xxiii. 29. Every blow of the hammer is to fasten the nails of the building; the preacher's words are but to fasten you the more to Christ; they weaken themselves to strengthen and settle you. This is the grand design of preaching, not only for the enlightening, but for the establishing of souls; not only to guide them in the right way, but to keep them in it. Now, if you be not settled, you do not answer God's end in giving you the ministry.

2. To be settled in religion: it is both a Christian's excellency and honour: it is his excellency; when the milk is settled, it turns to cream; now, he will be something zealous for the truth, walk in close communion with God. And his honour, Prov. xvi. 31. 'The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.' It is one of the best sights, to see an old disciple; to see silver hairs adorned with golden virtues.

3. Such as are not settled in the faith, can never suffer for it; sceptics in religion will hardly ever prove martyrs; they that are not settled do hang in suspense; when they think of the joys of heaven, then they will espouse the gospel; but when they think of persecution, then they desert it. Unsettled Christians do not consult what is best, but what is safest: "The apostate (saith Tertullian) seems to put God and Satan in balance, and having weighed both their services, prefers the devil's service, and proclaims him to be the best master: and, in this sense, may be said to put Christ to open shame," Heb. vi. 6. They will never suffer for the truth, but be as a soldier that leaves his colours, and runs over to the enemy's side; he will fight on the devil's side for pay.

4. Not to be settled in the faith, is highly provoking to God: to espouse the truth, and then to fall away, brings an ill report upon the gospel, which will not go unpunished: Psal. lxxviii. 57, 59. 'They turned back, and dealt unfaithfully; when

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God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel.' The apostate drops as a windfall into the devil's mouth.

5. If ye are not settled in religion, you will never grow : we are commanded ' to grow up into the head, Christ,' Eph. iv.

14. But if we are unsettled, no growing : ' the plant which is continually removing never thrives.' He can no more grow in godliness, who is unsettled, than a bone can grow in the body that is out of joint.

6. What great need is there to be settled ? because there are so many things to unsettle us, and make us fall away from the truth. Seducers are abroad, whose work is to draw away people from the principles of religion, 1 John ii. 26. ' Those things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.' Seducers are the devils factors ; they are of all others the greatest felons, that would rob you of the truth : seducers have silver tongues ; a fair tongue can put off bad wares ; they have a slight to deceive, Eph. iv. 14. The Greek word there is taken from those that can cog a die, and cast it for the best advantage : so seducers are impostors, they can cog a die ; they can so dissemble and sophisticate the truth, that they can deceive others. Now, the style by which seducers use to deceive, is,

1. By wisdom of words, Rom. xvi. 18. ' By good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple.' They have fine elegant phrases, flattering language, whereby they work on the weaker sort, as being christed with Christ, and the light within them.

2. Another slight, is a pretence of extraordinary piety, that so people may admire them, and suck in their doctrine. They seem to be men of zeal and sanctity, and to be divinely inspired : they pretend revelations, as Munster, Michael Servetus, and other of the Anabaptists in Germany, though they were tainted with pride, lust, and avarice.

3. A third slight or cheat seducers have, is a labouring to vilify and nullify sound orthodox teachers ; they would eclipse those that bring the truth, like unto the black vapours that darken the light of heaven : they would defame others, that themselves may be more admired. Thus the false teachers cried down Paul, that they might be received, Gal. iv. 17.

4. The fourth slight or cheat of seducers, is by " preaching " doctrine of liberty : " as the Antinomian preacheth, that men are freed from the moral law, the rule as well as the curse. He preacheth that Christ hath done all for them, and they need to do nothing. So he makes the doctrine of free grace a key to open the door to all licentiousness.

5. Another thing to unsettle Christians, is persecutors, 2 Tim. iii. 12. The gospel is a rose cannot be plucked without prickles. The legacy Christ hath bequeathed is the *Cross* : while there is

a devil and a wicked man in the world, never expect a charter of exemption from trouble; and how many fall away in an hour of persecution? Rev. iii. 4. 'There appeared a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns; and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven:' the red dragon, the heathenish empire; and his tail, viz. his power and subtilty, drew away stars, viz. eminent professors, that seemed to shine as stars in the firmament of the church. Therefore we see what need there is to be settled in the truth, for fear the tail of the dragon cast us to the earth.

6. To be unsettled in good, is the sin of the devils, Jude 6. They are called 'morning stars,' Job xxxviii. 7. but 'falling stars;' they were holy, but mutable. As the vessel is overturned with the sail, so their sails being swelled with pride, were overturned, 1 Tim. iii. 6. By unsettledness, who dost thou imitate but lapsed angels? The devil was the first apostate. So much for the first proposition, that it is a great duty of Christians to be settled: the sons of Sion should be like mount Sion, which cannot be removed.

*Second,* The second proposition is, that the way for Christians to be settled, is to be well grounded: 'if ye continue grounded and settled.' The Greek word for *grounded*, a metaphor, it alludes to a building that hath the foundation well laid; so Christians should be grounded in the essential point of religion, and have their foundation well laid.

Here let me speak to two things: 1. That we should be grounded in the knowledge of fundamentals. 2. That this grounding is the best way to settling.

(1.) That we should be grounded in the knowledge of fundamentals: the apostle speaks of the 'first principles of the oracles of God,' Heb. v. 13. In all arts and sciences, logic, physick, mathematics, there are some *præcognita*, some rules and principles that must necessarily be known to the practice of those arts; so, in divinity, there must be the first principles laid down: the knowledge of the grounds and principles of religion is exceeding useful.

1. Else we cannot serve God aright; we can never worship God acceptably, unless we worship him regularly; and how can we do that, if we are ignorant of the rules and elements of religion? We are bid to give God a 'reasonable service,' Rom. xii. 1. If we understand not the grounds of religion, how can it be a reasonable service?

2. Knowledge of the grounds of religion much enricheth the mind: it is a lamp to our feet; it directs us in the whole course of Christianity, as the eye directs the body. Knowledge of fundamentals is the golden key that opens the chief mysteries of religion; it gives us a whole system and body of divinity, ex-

ably drawn in all its lineaments and lively colours: it helps us to understand many of those difficult things, which do occur in the reading of the word; it helps to untie many scripture knots.

3. Armour of proof; it doth furnish us with weapons to fight against the adversaries of the truth.

4. It is the holy seed of which grace is formed: It is the *semen fidei*, the seed of faith, Psal. ix. 10. It is *radix amoris*, the root of love, Eph. iii. 17. 'Being rooted and grounded in love.' The knowledge of principles conduceth to the making of a complete Christian.

(2.) That this grounding is the best way to settling: 'grounded and settled.' A tree, that it may be well settled, must be well rooted: so, if you be well settled in religion, you must be rooted in the principles of it. He, in Plutarch, set up a dead man, and he would not stand. O faith he, "there must be "something within:" so, that we may stand in shaking times, there must be a principle of knowledge within; first grounded, and then settled. That the ship may be kept from overturning, it must have its anchor fastened; knowledge of principles, is to the soul as an anchor to the ship, that holds it steady in the midst of all the rolling waves of error, or the violent winds of persecution. First grounded and then settled.

USE I. See the reason why so many people are unsettled, ready to embrace every novel opinion, and dress themselves in as many religions as they do fashions; it is because they are ungrounded. See how the apostle joins these two together, 'unlearned and unstable,' 2 Pet. iii. 16. Such as are unlearned in the main points of divinity, will be unstable. As the body cannot be strong that hath the sinews shrunk; so neither can that Christian be strong in religion, who wants the grounds of knowledge, which are the sinews to strengthen and stablish him.

USE II. See then what great necessity there is of laying down all the main grounds of religion in a way of catechise, that the weakest judgment may be instructed in the knowledge of the truth, and strengthened in the love of it; catechising is the best expedient for the grounding and settling of people. I fear, one reason why there hath been no more good done by preaching, hath been because the chief heads and articles in religion have not been explained in a catechistical way; catechising is the laying the foundation, Heb. vi. 7. to preach, and not to catechise, is to build without a foundation. This way of catechising, is not novel, it is apostolical: the primitive church had their forms of catechism: so much those phrases imply a 'form of sound words,' 2 Tim. i. 13. and 'the first principles of the oracles of God,' Heb. vi. 1. And since the church had their



*catechimoni*, as Grotius and Erasmus observe; many of the ancient fathers have written for it, Fulgentius, Austin, Theodoret, Lactantius and others. God hath given great success to it. By this laying down of grounds of religion catechistically. Christians have been clearly instructed, and wondrously built up in the Christian faith, inasmuch that Julian the apostate, seeing the great success of catechising, did put down all schools and places of public literature, and instructing of youth. It is my design therefore (with the blessing of God) to begin this work of catechising the next sabbath-day: and I intend every other sabbath, in the afternoon, to make it my whole work to lay down the grounds and fundamentals of religion in a catechistical way. If I am hindered in this work by men, or taken away by death, I hope God will raise up some other labourer in the vineyard among you that may perfect this work which I am now beginning.

## MAN'S CHIEF END IS TO GLORIFY GOD.

*Q. 1. WHAT is the chief end of man?*

*Ans.* Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever.

Here are two ends of life specified, 1. The glorifying of God  
2. The enjoying of God.

*First*, I begin with the first, the glorifying of God, 1 Pet. iv. 11. 'That God in all things may be glorified?' the glory of God is a silver-thread which must run through all our actions: 1 Cor. x. 31. 'Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' Every thing works to some end in things natural and artificial; now man being a rational creature, must propose some end to himself, and that is, that he may lift up God in the world; and better lose his life, than lose the end of his living: so then, the great truth asserted is this, that the end of every man's living, is to glorify God; this is the yearly rent that is paid to the crown of heaven. Glorifying of God hath respect to all the persons in the Trinity; it respects God the Father, who gave us our life; it respects God the Son, who lost his for us; it respects God the Holy Ghost, who produceth a new life in us; we must bring glory to the whole Trinity.

When we speak of God's glory, the question will be moved, *what are we to understand by God's glory?*

*Ans.* There is a twofold glory: 1. The glory that God hath in himself, his intrinsecal glory. Glory is essential to the God-head, as light is to the sun: he is called the 'God of glory,'

Acts vii. 2. Glory is the sparkling of the Deity ; glory is so co-natural to the Godhead, that God cannot be God without it. The creature's honour is not essential to his being ; a king is a man without his regal ornaments, when his crown and royal robe are taken away : but God's glory is such an essential part of his being, that he cannot be God without it : God's very life lies in his glory. This glory can receive no addition, because it is infinite ; this glory is that which God is most tender of, and which he will not part with, Isa. xlviii. 8. ' My glory I will not give to another.' God will give temporal blessings, to his children, such as wisdom, riches, honour ; he will give them spiritual blessings, he will give them grace, he will give them his love, he will give them heaven ; but his essential glory he will not give to another. King Pharaoh parted with a ring off his finger to Joseph, and a gold chain, but he would not part with his throne. Gen. xli. 40. ' Only in the throne will I be greater than thou.' So God will do much for his people ; he will give them the inheritance, he will put some of Christ's glory, as mediator upon them : but his essential glory he will not part with ; ' in the throne he will be greater.'

2. The glory which is ascribed to God, or which his creatures labour to bring to him, 1 Chron. xvi. 29. ' Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.' And, 1 Cor. vi. 20. ' Glorify God in your body and in your spirit.' The glory we give God, is nothing else but our lifting up his name in the world, and magnifying him in the eyes of others, Phil. i. 20. ' Christ shall be magnified in my body.'

Q. *What is it to glorify God, or wherein doth it consist ?*

A. Glorifying of God consists in four things : (1.) Appretiation. (2.) Adoration. (3.) Affection. (4.) Subjection. This is the yearly rent we pay to the crown of heaven.

1. Appretiation : is to glorify God, to set God highest in our thoughts, to have a venerable esteem of him, Psal. xcii. 8. ' Thou, Lord, art most high for evermore,' Psal. xcvi. 9. ' Thou art exalted far above all gods.' There is in God all that may draw forth both wonder and delight ; there is in him a constellation of all beauties ; he is *prima, causa*, the original and spring-head of being, who sheds a glory upon the creature. This is to glorify God, when we are God-admirers ; we admire God in his attributes, which are the glistering beams by which the divine nature shines forth ; we admire him in his promises, which are the charter of free-grace, and the spiritual cabinet where the pearl of price is hid ; we admire God in the noble effects of his power and wisdom, viz. the making of the world ; this is called ' the work of his fingers,' Psal. viii. 3. Such curious needle-work it was, that none but a God could work. This

is to glorify God, to have God-admiring thoughts; we esteem him most excellent, and search for diamonds only in this rock.

2. Glorifying of God consists in adoration, or worship, Psal. xxix. 2. 'Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.' There is a twofold worship: 1. A civil reverence we give to persons of honour, Gen. xxiii. 7. 'Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the children of Heth:' Piety is no enemy to courtesy, 2. A divine worship, which we give to God, is his prerogative royal, Neh. viii. 6. 'They bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces towards the ground.' This divine worship God is very jealous of; this is the apple of his eye, this is the pearl of his crown, which he guards, as he did the tree of life, with cherubims and a flaming sword, that no man may come near it to violate it; divine worship must be such as God himself hath appointed, else it is 'offering strange fire,' Lev. x. 2. The Lord would have Moses make the tabernacle, 'according to the pattern in the Mount,' Exod. xxv. 40. he must not leave out any thing in the pattern, nor add to it. If God was so exact and curious about the place of worship, how exact will he be about the matter of his worship? Surely here every thing must be according to the pattern prescribed in his word.

3. Affections: this is a part of the glory we give to God; God counts himself glorified when he is loved, Deut. vi. 5. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.' There is a twofold love: 1. *Amor Concupiscentiæ*, a love of concupiscence, which is self-love; when we love another, because he doth us a good turn: thus a wicked man may be said to love God, because he hath given him a good crop, or filled his cup with wine; and, to speak properly, this is rather to love God's blessing than to love God. 2. *Amor amicitie*, a love of delight, as a man takes delight in a friend; this is indeed to love God: the heart is set upon God, as a man's heart is set upon his treasure. And this love is, 1. Exuberant, not a few drops, but a stream. 2. It is superlative; we give God the best of our love, the cream of it, Cant. viii. 2. 'I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.' If the spouse had a cup more juicy and spiced, Christ must drink of it. 3. It is intense and ardent; true saints are seraphims burning in holy love to God. The spouse was *amore percussa*, in fainting fits, 'sick of love,' Cant. ii. 5. Thus to love God is to glorify him; he who is the chief of our happiness, hath the chief of our affections.

4. Subjection, when we dedicate ourselves to God, and stand ready prest for his service. Thus the angels in heaven glorify him; they wait on his throne, and are ready to take a commission from him; therefore they are resembled by the cherubims



with their wings displayed, to shew how swift the angels are in their obedience. This is to glorify God, when we are devoted to his service; our head studies for God, our tongue pleads for him, our hands relieve his members: The wise men that came to Christ, did not only bow the knee to him, but presented him with gold and myrrh, Matth. ii. 11. So we must not only bow the knee, give God worship, but bring presents, golden obedience. This is to glorify God, when we stick at no service; we will fight under the banner of his gospel, against regiments, and say to him, as David to King Saul, 1 Sam. xvii. 32. 'Thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.' Thus you see wherein the glorifying of God doth consist, in appretiation, adoration, affection, subjection.

A good Christian is like the sun, which doth not only send forth heat, but goes its circuit round the world; thus, he who glorifies God, hath not only his affections heated with love to God, but he goes his circuit too; he moves vigorously in the sphere of obedience.

*Q. Why must we glorify God?*

*Ans.* 1. Because he gives us our being, Psal. c. 3. 'It is he that made us.' We think it a great kindness in a man to spare our life, but what kindness is it in God to give us our life? We draw our breath from him; and as life, so all the comforts of life are from God: he gives us health, which is the sauce to sweeten our life; he gives us food, which is the oil that nourisheth the lamp of life: now, if all we receive is from the hand of his bounty, is it not good reason we should glorify him, and live to him, seeing we live by him? Rom. xi. 36. 'For of him, and through him are all things.' Of him are all, all we have is of his fulness; through him are all, all we have is through his free-grace; and therefore to him should be all: so it follows, 'To him be glory for ever.' God is not only our benefactor, but our founder; the rivers come from the sea, and they empty their silver streams into the sea again.

2. Because God hath made all things for his own glory, Prov. xvi. 4. 'The Lord hath made all things for himself;' that is, 'for his glory.' As a king hath excise out of commodities. God will have his glory out of every thing: he will have glory out of the wicked, the glory of his justice; they will not give him glory, but he will get his glory upon them, Exod. xiv. 17. 'I will get me honour upon Pharaoh.' But especially he hath made the godly for his glory; they are the lively organs of his praise, Isa. xliii. 21. 'This people have I formed for myself, and they shall shew forth my praise.' It is true, they cannot add to his glory, but they may exalt it; they cannot raise him in heaven, but they may raise him in the esteem of others. God hath adopted the saints into his family, and made them a royal

priesthood, that they should shew forth the praises of him who hath called them, 1 Pet. ii. 9.

3. Because the glory of God hath such intrinsic value and excellency in it ; it transcends the thoughts of men, and the tongue of angels. God's glory is his treasure, all his riches lie here ; as Micah said, Judges xviii. 24. ' What have I more ? ' So of God, what hath God more ? God's glory is more worth than heaven, more worth than the salvation of all men's souls : better kingdoms be thrown down, better men and angels be annihilated, than God should lose one jewel of his crown, one beam of his glory.

4. Creatures below us, and above us, bring glory to God ; and do we think to sit rent-free ? Shall every thing glorify God, but man ? It is a pity then that ever man was made ! 1. Creatures below us, glorify God, the inanimate creatures : the heavens glorify God, Psal. xix. 1. ' The heavens declare the glory of God.' The curious workmanship of heaven sets forth the glory of its Maker ; the firmament is beautified and penciled out in blue and azure colours, where the power and wisdom of God may be clearly seen. ' The heavens declare his glory ; ' we may see the glory of God blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars. 2. Look into the air, the birds, with their chirping music, sing hymns of praise to God, saith Anselm. Every beast doth in its kind glorify God, Isa. xliii. 20. ' The beasts of the field shall honour me.' (2) Creatures above us glorify God : ' the angels are ministring spirits,' Heb. i. 14. They are still waiting on God's throne, and bring some revenues of glory into the exchequer of heaven. Then surely man should be much more studious of God's glory than the angels ; for God hath honoured him more than the angels, in that Christ took man's nature upon him, and not the angels : say, though in regard of creation, God hath made man ' a little lower than the angels,' Heb. ii. 7. yet, in regard of redemption, God hath set him higher than the angels ; he hath married mankind to himself ; the angels are Christ's friends, but not his spouse ; he hath covered us with the purple robe of his righteousness, which is a better righteousness than the angels have, 2 Cor. v. 20. So that if the angels bring glory to God, much more should we, being dignified with honour above the angelical spirits.

5. *Anf.* We must bring glory to God, because all our hopes hang upon him, Psal. xxxix. 7. ' My hope is in thee.' And Psal. lxii. 5. ' My expectation is from him ; ' I expect a kingdom from him. A child that is good-natured will honour his parent, as expecting all that ever he is like to be worth from him, Psal. lxxxvii. 8. ' All my fresh springs are in thee.' The fiver springs of grace, the golden springs of glory.

Q. *How many ways may we glorify God ?*



*Ans.* (1.) It is a glorifying God, when we aim purely at God's glory; it is one thing to advance God's glory, another thing to aim at it. God must be the *Terminus ad quem*, the ultimate end of all actions. Thus Christ, John viii. 50. 'I seek not mine own glory, but the glory of him that sent me.' It is the note of an hypocrite, he hath a squint eye, he looks more to his own glory than God's glory. Our Saviour decyphers such, and gives a caveat against them, Matth. vi. 2. 'When thou givest alms, do not sound a trumpet.' A stranger would ask, 'What means the noise of this trumpet?' Then it was answered, 'they are going to give to the poor.' And so they did not give alms, but sell them for honour and applause, that they may have glory of men: the breath of men was the wind that blew the sails of their charity; 'verily they have their reward.' The hypocrite may make his acquittance and write, 'received in full payment.' Chrysostom calls vain-glory one of the devil's great nets to catch men. And Cyprian says, "whom Satan cannot prevail against by intemperance, those he prevails against by pride and vain-glory." Oh let us take heed of self-worshipping! aim purely at God's glory.

*Q.* How shall we know we aim at God's glory?

*Ans.* 1. When we prefer God's glory above all other things; above credit, estate, relations; when the glory of God comes in competition with them, we prefer his glory before them. If relations lie in our way to heaven, we must either leap over them, or tread upon them: a child must unchild himself, and forget he is a child; he must know neither father nor mother in God's cause, Deut. xxxiii. 9. 'Who said unto his father and mother, I have not seen him;' neither did he acknowledge his brethren. This is to aim at God's glory.

2. Then we aim at God's glory, when we can be content that God's will should take place, though it cross ours: Lord, I am content to be a loser, if thou be a gainer; to have less health, if I have more grace, and thou more glory; whether it be food or bitter physic thou givest me, Lord, I desire that which may be most for thy glory: thus our blessed Saviour, 'not as I will, but as thou wilt,' Matth. xxvi. 39. So God might have more glory by his sufferings, he was content to suffer, John xii. 28. 'Father, glorify thy name.'

3. Then we aim at God's glory, when we can be content to be out-shined by others in gifts and esteem, so God's glory may be increased: a man that hath God in his heart, and God's glory in his eye, desires that God should be exalted; and if this be effected, let who will be the instrument, he rejoiceth, Phil. i. 15. 'Some preach Christ of envy: notwithstanding Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice;' they preached Christ of envy, they envied Paul that concurrence of

people, and they preached that they might outshine him in gifts, and get away some of his hearers: well, saith Paul, Christ is preached, and God is like to have glory, therefore I rejoice; let my candle go out, if the Sun of Righteousness may but shine.

(2.) We glorify God by an ingenuous confession of sin: the thief on the cross had dishonoured God in his life, but at his death he brings glory to God by confession of sin, Luke xxiii. 41. 'We indeed suffer justly.' He acknowledged he deserved not only crucifixion, but damnation, Josh. vii. 19. 'My son, give, I pray thee, glory to God, and make confession unto him.' An humble confession exalts God: how is God's free-grace magnified in crowning those who deserve to be condemned! as the excusing and mincing of sin doth cast a reproach upon God. Adam denies not he did taste the forbidden fruit, but instead of a full confession, he taxes God, Gen. iii. 12. 'The woman whom thou gavest me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.' It is long of thee, if thou hadst not given me the woman to be a tempter, I had not sinned. So confession glorifies God, it clears, it acknowledgeth he is holy and righteous, whatever he doth. Nehemiah vindicates God's righteousness, ch. ix. 33. 'Thou art just in all that is brought upon us.' A confession then is ingenuous, when it is free, not forced, Luke xv. 18. 'I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.' He chargeth himself with sin before ever his Father chargeth him with it.

(3.) We glorify God by believing, Rom. iv. 20. 'Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God.' Unbelief affronts God, it gives him the lie; 'He that believeth not, maketh God a liar,' 1 John v. 10. So faith brings glory to God, it sets to its seal that God is true, John iii. 33. He that believes, flies to God's mercy and truth, as to an altar of refuge; he doth not ingarrison himself in the promises, he trusts all he hath with God, Psal. xxxi. 5. 'Into thy hands I commit my spirit.' This is a great way of bringing glory to God, therefore God honours faith, because faith honours God. It is a great honour we do to a man, when we trust him with all we have, we put our lives and estates into his hand; a sign we have a good opinion of him. The three children glorified God by believing, 'The God whom we serve, is able to deliver us, and will deliver us,' Dan. iii. 17. Faith knows there are no impossibilities with God, and will trust him, where it cannot trace him.

(4.) We glorify God by being tender of God's glory; God's glory is dear to him, as the apple of his eye: now, when we are tender of his glory, by laying to heart his dishonours, this is a glorifying of him. An ingenuous child weeps to see a disgrace done to his father, Psal. lxi. 9. 'The reproaches of them that reproach thee are fallen upon me.' When we hear God reproached, it is as if we were reproached; when God's glory

suffers, it is as if we suffered. This is to be tender of God's glory.

(5.) We glorify God by fruitfulness, John xv. 8. 'Hereby is my father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.' As it is a dishonour to God to be barren, so fruitfulness doth honour him: Phil. i. 11. 'Filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise of his glory.' We must not be like the fig-tree in the gospel, which had nothing but leaves, but like the pomecitron, that is continually either mellowing or blossoming; it is never without fruit. It is not profession, but fruit glorifies God; God expects to have his glory from us this way, 1 Cor. ix. 7. 'Who planted a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit of it?' Trees in the forest may be barren, but trees in the garden are fruitful: we must bring forth the fruits of love and good works, Matth. v. 16. 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' Faith doth sanctify our works, and works do testify our faith: to be doing good to others, to be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, doth much glorify God. And thus Christ did glorify his Father; 'he went about doing good,' Acts x. 38. By being fruitful, we are fair in God's eyes, Jer. xi. 16. 'The Lord called thy name a green olive-tree, fair and of goodly fruit.' And we must bear much fruit, it is muchness of fruit glorifies God; 'if ye bear much fruit.' The spouse's breasts are compared to clusters of grapes, Cant. vii. 7. to shew how fertile she was. Though the lowest degree of grace may bring salvation to you, yet not so much glory to God; it was not a spark of love Christ commended in Mary, but much love, 'she loved much,' Luke vii. 47.

(6.) We glorify God, by being contented in that state where his providence hath set us; we give God the glory of his wisdom, in that we rest satisfied with what he carves out to us: Thus did holy Paul glorify God; the Lord did cast him into as great variety of conditions as any man, 'in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft,' 2 Cor. xi. 23. yet he had learned to be content: St. Paul could sail either in a storm or a calm; he could be any thing that God would have him; he could either want or abound, Phil. iv. 13. A good Christian argues thus: It is God that hath put me in this condition; he could have raised me higher, if he pleased, but that might have been a snare to me; God hath done it in wisdom and love; therefore I will sit down satisfied with my condition. Surely this doth much glorify God; God counts himself much honoured by such a Christian: saith God, Here is one after my own heart; let me do what I will with him, I hear no murmuring, he is content: this shews abundance of grace. When grace is crowning, it is not so much to be content; but when grace is conflicting with inconveniences,



then to be content, is a glorious thing indeed : for one to be content when he is in heaven, is no wonder ; but to be content under the cross, is like a Christian : this man must needs bring glory to God ; for he shews to all the world, that though he hath little meal in barrel, yet he hath enough in God to make him content ; he saith, as David, Psal. xvi. 5. ‘ The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance ; the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places.’

(7.) We glorify God in working out our own salvation : God hath twisted these two together, his glory and our good ; we glorify him, by promoting our own salvation : it is a glory to God to have multitudes of converts ; now, his design of free grace takes, and God hath the glory of his mercy ; so that, while we are endeavouring our salvation, we are honouring God. What an encouragement is this to the service of God, to think, while I am hearing and praying, I am glorifying God ; while I am furthering my own glory in heaven, I am increasing God’s glory ? Would it not be an encouragement to a subject, to hear his prince say to him, You will honour and please me very much, if you will go to yonder mine of gold, and dig as much gold for yourself as you can carry away ? So, for God to say, Go to the ordinances, get as much grace as you can, dig out as much salvation as you can ; and the more happiness you have, the more I shall count myself glorified.

(8.) We glorify God, by living to God, 2 Cor. v. 15. ‘ that they which live, should not live to themselves, but unto him who died for them.’ Rom. xiv. 8. ‘ Whether we live, we live unto the Lord.’ The Mammonist lives to his money, the Epicure lives to his belly ; the design of a sinner’s life is to gratify lust. But then we glorify God, when we live to God.

*Q. What is it to live to God ?*

*Ans.* When we live to his service, and lay out ourselves wholly for God : the Lord hath sent us into the world, as a merchant sends his factor beyond the seas to trade for him : then we live to God, when we trade for his interest, and propagate his gospel. God hath given every man a talent ; now, when he doth not hide it in a napkin, but improves it for God, this is to live to God. When a master in a family, by counsel and good example, labours to bring his servants to Christ ; when a minister doth exhaust himself in the labours of his holy calling, when he spends himself, and is spent, that he may win souls to Christ, and make the crown flourish upon Christ’s head ; when the magistrate doth not wear the sword in vain, but labours to cut down sin, and suppress vice ; this is to live to God, and this is a glorifying of God : Phil. i. 20. ‘ That Christ might be magnified, whether by life or by death.’ Three wishes St. Paul



had, and they were all about Christ, that he may be found in Christ, be with Christ, and that he might magnify Christ.

(9.) We glorify God by walking cheerfully. It is a glory to God, when the world sees a Christian hath that within him, that can make him cheerful in the worst times; he can, with the nightingale, sing with a thorn at his breast. The people of God have ground of cheerfulness; they are justified, and instated into adoption; and this creates inward peace; it makes music within, whatever storms are without, 2 Cor. i. 4. 1 Thess. i. 6. if we consider what Christ hath wrought for us by his blood, and wrought in us by his Spirit, it is a ground of great cheerfulness, and this cheerfulness, glorifies God; it reflects upon a master when the servant is always drooping and sad, sure he is kept to hard commons, his master doth not give him what is fitting; so, when God's people hang their harps on willows, sure they do not serve a good master, repent of their choice; this reflects dishonour on God. As the gross sins of the wicked bring a scandal on the gospel, so do the uncheerful lives of the godly, Ps. c. 2. 'Serve the Lord with gladness.' Your serving him doth not glorify him, unless it be with gladness. A Christian's cheerful looks glorify God; religion doth not take away our joy, but refine and clarify it; it doth not break our viol, but tunes it, and makes the music sweeter.

(10.) We glorify God, by standing up for his truths: much of God's glory lies in his truth; God hath entrusted us with his truth, as a master entrusts his servant with his purse to keep. We have not a richer jewel to trust God with, than our souls, God hath not a richer jewel to trust us with, than his truth: truth is a beam that shines from God, much of his glory lies in his truth: now, when we are advocates for truth, this is to glorify God; so Athanasius, the bulwark for truth, Jude 3. 'That ye should contend earnestly for the truth,' viz. the doctrine of faith. The Greek word to contend, signifies a great contending, as one would contend for his land, and not suffer his right to be taken from him; so we should contend for the truth; were there more of this holy contention, God would have more glory. Some can contend earnestly for trifles and ceremonies, but not for the truth: we should count him indiscreet, that would contend more for a picture, than for his land of inheritance; for a box of counters, than for his box of evidences.

(11.) We glorify God, by praising of him. Doxology, or praise, is a God-exalting work: Psal. l. 23. 'Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.' The Hebrew word *Bara*, to create, and *Barak*, to praise, are little different, because the end of creation is to praise God. David was called the sweet-singer of Israel, and his praising God, was called a glorifying of God, Psal.

lxxxvi. 12. 'I will praise thee, O Lord my God, and I will glorify thy name.' Though nothing can add to God's essential glory, yet praise exalts him in the eyes of others: when we praise God, we spread his fame and renown, we display the trophies of his excellency; in this manner the angels glorify God, and they are the choiristers of heaven, and do trumpet forth God's praise. And praising of God is one of the highest and purest acts of religion; in prayer we act like men; in praise we act like angels; this is an high degree of glorifying God. Believers are called 'temples of God,' 1 Cor. iii. 16. When our tongues praise, then the organs in God's spiritual temple are going. How sad is it, that God hath no more of his glory from us this way! Many are full of mummings and discontents, but seldom do they bring glory to God, by giving him the praise due to his name. We read of the saints having harps in their hand, Rev. v. 8. the emblems of praise. Many have tears in their eyes, and complaints in their mouth, but few have harps in their hand, blessing and glorifying of God: let us honour God this way. Praise is the quit-rent we pay to God; while God renews our lease, we must renew our rent.

(12.) We glorify God, by being zealous for his name, Numb. xxv. 11. 'Phineas hath turned my wrath away, while he was zealous for my sake.' Zeal is a mixed affection, a compound of love and anger; it carries forth our love to God, and anger against sin in a most intense manner: Zeal is impatient of God's dishonour; a Christian fired with zeal, takes a dishonour done to God, worse than an injury done to himself: Rev. ii. 2. 'Thou canst not bear them that are evil.' Our Saviour Christ did thus glorify his Father: he, being baptized with a spirit of zeal, drove the money-changers out of the temple, John ii. 14, 17. 'The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.'

(13.) We glorify God, when we have an eye at God, both in our natural and in our civil actions: 1. In our natural actions; in eating and drinking, 1 Cor. x. 31. 'Whether therefore ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God.' A gracious person holds the golden bridle of temperance; he takes his meat as a medicine to heal the decays of nature, and that he may be the fitter, by the strength he receives, for the service of God, he makes his food, not fuel for lust, but help to duty. 2. In buying and selling, we do all to the glory of God. The wicked live upon unjust gain, either by falsifying the balance, Hof. xii. 7. 'The balances of deceit are in his hands:' While men make their weights lighter, they make their sins heavier; or, by exacting more than the commodity is worth, they do not for fourscore write down fifty, but for fifty, fourscore; they exact double the price that a thing is worth: but then we buy and sell to the glory of God, when in our buying and selling,

we observe that golden maxim, 'To do to others, as we would have them to do to us,' Matth. vii. 12. When we do sell our commodities, that we do not sell our conscience, Acts xxiv. 16. 'Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.' This is to glorify God, when we have an eye at God in all our civil and natural actions, and will do nothing that may reflect any blemish on religion.

(14.) We glorify God, by labouring to draw others to God; we convert others, and so make them instruments of glorifying God. We should be both diamonds and loadstones; diamonds for the lustre of grace, and loadstones for our attractive virtues in drawing others to Christ: Gal. iv. 19. 'My little children, of whom I travel,' &c. This is a great way of glorifying God, when we break the devil's prison, and turn men from the power of Satan to God.

(15.) We glorify God in a high manner, when we suffer for God, and seal the gospel with our blood; John xxi. 18, 19. 'When thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee, and carry thee, whether thou wouldest not: This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.' God's glory shines in the ashes of his martyrs: Isa. xxiv. 15. 'Wherefore glorify the Lord in fires.' Micaiah was in the prison, Isaiah was sawn asunder, Paul beheaded, Luke hanged on an olive-tree; thus did they, by their death, glorify God. The sufferings of the primitive saints did honour God, and make the gospel famous in the world: what would others say? See what a good master they serve, and how they love him, that they will venture the loss of all in his service. The glory of Christ's kingdom doth not stand in worldly pomp and grandeur, as other kings; but it is seen in the cheerful sufferings of his people; The saints of old 'loved not their lives to the death,' Rev. xii. 11. They snatch up torments as so many crowns. God grant we may thus glorify him, if he calls us to it. Many pray, 'Let this cup pass away,' but not, 'thy will be done.'

(16.) We glorify God, when we give God the glory of all we do. Herod, when he had made an oration, and the people gave a shout, saying, 'it is the voice of a God, and not of a man;' and he took this glory to himself, the text saith, 'Immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms,' Acts xii. 23. Then we glorify God, when we sacrifice the praise and glory of all to God, 1 Cor. xv. 10. 'I laboured more abundantly than they all,' a speech, one would think, favoured of pride; but the apostle pulls the crown from his own head, and sets it upon the head of free-grace, 'yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me;' as Joab, when he fought against Rabbah



sent for king David, that he might carry away the crown of the victory, 2 Sam. xii. 28. So a Christian when he hath gotten power over any corruption, or temptation, sends for Christ, that he may carry away the crown of the victory; as the silk worm, when she weaves her curious work, she hides herself under the silk, and is not seen; so when we have done any thing praiseworthy, we must hide ourselves under the vail of humility, and transfer the glory of all we have done to God. Constantine did use to write the name of Christ over his door, so should we write the name of Christ over our duties; let him wear the garland of praise.

(17.) We glorify God, by an holy life. As a bad life doth dishonour God, 1 Pet. ii. 9. 'Ye are an holy nation, that ye should shew forth the praises of him that hath called you.' Rom. ii. 24. 'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.' Epiphanius saith, "That the looseness of some Christians, in his time, made many of the heathen shun the company of the Christians, and would not be drawn to hear their sermons." So, by our exact Bible-conversation we glorify God. Though the main work of religion lies in the heart, yet our light must so shine, that others may behold it; the chief of building is in the foundation, yet the glory of it is in the frontispiece, so beauty in the conversation: when the saints, who are called jewels, cast a sparkling lustre of holiness in the eyes of the world; then they 'walk as Christ walked,' 1 John ii. 6. when they live as if they had seen the Lord with bodily eyes, and been with him upon the mount; then they adorn religion, and bring revenues of glory to the crown of heaven.

*Use 1.* It shews us what should not be our chief end, not to get great estates, not to lay up treasures upon earth; this is the degeneracy of mankind since the fall, their great design is to compass the 'earth; and grow rich; and this they make their chief end: those never think of glorifying God, they trade for the world, but are not factors for heaven: Eccles. ix. 3. 'Madness is in their heart while they live.' Sometimes they never arrive at an estate, they do not get the venison they hunt for; or tho' they do, what have they? that which will not fill the heart, no more than the mariner's breath will fill the sails of a ship; like a picture drawn on the ice, and to spend all one's time, as Israel, in gathering straw, but remember not the end of living to glorify God: Eccles. v. 16. 'What profit hath he that laboureth for the wind?' And these things are soon gone.

*Use 2.* It reproves such, 1. As bring no glory to God: They do not answer the end of their creation, their time is not true lived, but time lost; they are like the wood of the vine, Ezek. xv. 2. Their lives are, as St. Bernard speaks, "Either sinfulness or barrenness. An useless burden on the earth." God



will one day ask such a question as king Ahasuerus did, Esth. vi. 3. 'What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai?' So will the Lord say, What honour hath been done to me? what revenues of glory have you brought into my exchequer? There is none here present but God hath put you in some capacity of glorifying him; the health he hath given you, the parts, estate, seasons of grace, these all are opportunities put into your hand to glorify him; and, be assured God will call you to account, to know what you have done with the mercies he hath intrusted you with, what glory you have brought to him. The parable of the talents, Mat. xxv. 15. where the man with the five talents, and the two talents are brought to a reckoning, doth evidently shew that God will call you to a strict account, to know how you have traded with your talents, and what glory you have brought to him. Now how sad will it be with them who hide their talents in a napkin, that bring God no glory at all? ver. 30. 'Cast ye the unprofitable servant into utter darkness.' It is not enough for you to say, that you have not dishonoured God, you have not lived in gross sin; but what good have you done; what glory have you brought to God? It is not enough for the servant of the vineyard, that he do no hurt in the vineyard, he doth not break the trees, or destroy the hedges; if he doth not do service in the vineyard, he loseth his pay; if you do not good in your place, not glorify God, you will lose your pay, miss of salvation. Oh think of this, all you that live unserviceably! Christ cursed the barren fig-tree.

2. It reproves such as are so far from bringing glory to God, that they rob God of his glory, Mal. iii. 8. 'Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me.' They rob God, who take the glory due to God to themselves: 1. If they have gotten an estate, they ascribe all to their own wit and industry, they set the crown upon their own head, not considering that, Deut. viii. 18. 'Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.' 2. If they do any duty of religion they look a squint to their own glory, Mat. vi. 5. 'That they may be seen of men,' That they may be set upon a theatre, that others may admire and canonize them. The oil of vain glory feeds their lamp. How many hath the wind of popular breath blown to hell? Whom the devil could not destroy by intemperance, he hath by vain-glory.

3. It reproves them who fight against God's glory, Acts v. 29. 'Lest ye be found to fight against God.'

*Q. But who do fight against God's glory?*

*Ans.* Such as do oppose that, whereby God's glory is promoted: God's glory is much promoted in the preaching of the word, because it is his engine whereby he converts souls. Now, such as would hinder the preaching of the word, these fight

against God's glory, 1 Theff. ii. 16. 'Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved.' Dioclesian, who raised the 10th persecution against the Christians, did prohibit church meetings, and would have the temples of the Christians razed down; Such as hinder preaching, do as the Philistines that stop the wells, they stop the well of the water of life; they take away the physicians that should heal sin-sick souls; ministers are lights, Matth. v. 14. and who but thieves hate the light? these persons do directly strike at God's glory? and what an account will they have to give to God, when he shall charge the blood of men's souls upon them? Luke xi. 52. 'Ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves and them that were entering in ye hindered.' If there be either justice in heaven, or fire in hell, they shall not go unpunished.

*Use.* 4. Exhortation, let us every one, in our place, make this our chief end and design to glorify God: 1. Let me speak to magistrates; God hath put much glory upon them, Ps. lxxxii. 6. 'I have said ye are gods; and will they not glorify him whom he hath put so much glory upon? Magistrates should be zealous for God's worship and day; they should not let the sword rust in the scabbard, but draw it out for the cutting down of sin. 2. Ministers how should they study to promote God's glory; God hath entrusted them with two of the most precious things, his truths, and the souls of his people. Ministers are, by virtue of their office, to glorify God: 1. They must glorify God by labouring in the word and doctrine; 2 Tim. iv. 1. 'I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead: preach the word, be instant in season, out of season,' &c. It was Augustine's wish, "that Christ at his coming, might find him either praying or preaching." 2. Ministers must glorify God by their zeal and sanctity. The priests under the law before they served at the altar, did wash in the laver: such as serve in the Lord's house, must first be washed from gross sin in the laver of repentance. It is matter of grief and shame, to think how many, who call themselves ministers, do, instead of apparently bringing glory to God, dishonour God, 2 Chron. xi. 15. Their lives, as well as doctrines, are heterodox, they are not free from the sins which they reprove in others. Plutarch's servant upbraided him, "It is not as my master Plutarch saith; he hath written a book against wrath, anger, *et ipsi mihi irascitur*, yet he falls into a passion of anger with me:" So this minister preacheth against drunkenness, yet he will be drunk; he preacheth against swearing, yet he will swear; this reproacheth God, and makes the offering of the Lord to be abhorred. 3. Masters of families, do ye glorify God, season your children and servants with the knowledge of the Lord; your houses should be little churches, Gen. xviii. 19.

'I know that Abraham will command his children that they may keep the way of the Lord.' You that are masters, know you have a charge of souls under you ; for want of the bridle of family discipline, youth runs wild ; well, let me lay down some motives to glorify God.

1. *Mot.* It will be a great comfort in a dying hour, to think we have glorified God in our lives ; it was Christ's comfort before his death : John xvii. 3. 'I have glorified thee on earth.' At the hour of death, all your earthly comforts will vanish : if you think how rich you have been, what pleasures you have had on earth ; this will be so far from comforting you, that it will but torment you the more : what is one the better for an estate that is spent ? But now, to have conscience telling you, that you have glorified God on earth, what sweet comfort and peace will this let into your soul ! how will this make you long for death ! The servant that hath been all day working in the vineyard, longs till evening comes, when he shall receive his pay. They who have lived, and brought no glory to God, how can they think of dying with comfort ? They cannot expect an harvest, that never sowed any seed : how can they expect glory from God, that never brought any glory to him ? O in what horror will they be at death ! the worm of Conscience will know their souls, before the worms are gnawing their bodies.

2. *Mot.* If we glorify God, he will glorify our souls for ever ; by raising God's glory, we increase our own ; by glorifying God, we come at last to the blessed enjoying of him. And that brings me to the 2d, 'The enjoying of God.'

2dly, Man's chief end is to enjoy God for ever, Ps. lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee ? that is, what is there in heaven I desire to enjoy but thee ? There is a twofold fruition, or enjoying of God ; the one is in this life, the other in the life to come.

1st, An enjoying of God here in this life : The enjoying of God's presence ; it is a great matter to enjoy God's ordinances (a mercy that some do envy us) but to enjoy God's presence ; in the ordinances, is that which a gracious heart aspires after, Psal. lxiii. 2. 'To see thy glory so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.' This sweet enjoying of God, is, when we feel his Spirit co-operating with the ordinance, and distilling grace upon our hearts : 1. When in the word the Spirit doth quicken and raise the affections, Luke xxiv. 32. 'Did not our hearts burn within us ?' 2. When the spirit doth transform the heart, leaving an impress of holiness upon it, 2. Cor. iii. 8. 'We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.' When the Spirit doth revive the heart with comfort, it comes not only with its anointing, but its seal ; it sheds God's love abroad in the heart, Rom. v. 5. This is to enjoy God in an ordinance,



1 John v. 3. 'Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' In the word, we hear God's voice, and in the sacrament we have his kiss; this is enjoying of God: and what infinite content doth a gracious soul find in this! The heart being warmed and inflamed in a duty, this is God's answering by fire. When a Christian hath the sweet illapses of God's Spirit, these are the first fruits of glory, when God comes down to the soul in an ordinance: Now, Christ hath pulled off his vail, and showed his smiling face; now, he hath led a believer into the banqueting-house, and given him of the spiced wine of his love to drink; he hath put in his finger at the hole of the door; he hath touched the heart, and made it leap for joy: O how sweet is it thus to enjoy God! The godly have, in the use of the ordinances, had such divine raptures of joy, and soul transfigurations, that they have been carried above the world, and have despised all things here below.

*Use 1.* Is the enjoying of God in this life so sweet? How prodigiously wicked are they that prefer the enjoying of their lusts, before the enjoying of God! 2 Pet. iii. 3. 'The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life,' is the Trinity they worship. Lust is an inordinate desire or impulse, provoking the soul to that which is evil; there is the revengeful lust, and the wanton lust. Lust is like a feverish heat, it puts the soul into a flame. Aristotle calls sensual lusts brutish, because, when any lust is violent, reason or conscience cannot be heard, the beast rides the man: these lusts, when they are enjoyed, do besot and dispirit persons, Hos. iv. 11. 'Whoredom and wine take away the heart;' they have no heart for any thing that is good. How many make it their chief end, not to enjoy God, but to enjoy their lusts; as that Cardinal said, "Let him but keep his cardinal-ship of Paris, and he was content to lose his part in Paradise." Lust first bewitcheth with pleasure, and then comes the fatal dart, Prov. vii. 23. 'Till a dart strike through his liver.' This should be as a flaming sword to stop men in the way of their carnal delights. Who would for a drop of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath?

*Use 2.* Let it be our great care to enjoy God's sweet presence here, which is the beauty and comfort of the ordinances. Enjoying spiritual communion with God, is a riddle and mystery to most people; every one that hangs about the court doth not speak with the King. We may approach to God in ordinances, and, as it were, hang about the court of heaven, yet not enjoy communion with God: we may have the letter without the Spirit, the visible sign without the invisible grace: it is the enjoying of God in a duty we should chiefly look at, Psal. xlii. 2. 'My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.' Alas! what are all our worldly enjoyments without the enjoying of



God? What is it to enjoy a great deal of health, a brave estate, and not to enjoy God? Job xxx. 28. 'I went mourning without the sun.' So mayest thou say in the enjoyment of all creatures without God, 'I went mourning without the sun.' I have the star-light of outward enjoyments, but I cannot enjoy God, I want the Sun of Righteousness. 'I went mourning without the sun.' This should be our great design, not only to have the ordinances of God, but the God of the ordinances: the enjoying of God's sweet presence with us here, is the most contented life: he is an hive of sweetness, a magazine of riches, a fountain of delight, Psal. xxxvi. 8, 9. The higher the lark flies, the sweeter it sings; and the higher we fly by the wing of faith, the more of God we enjoy, the sweeter delight we feel in our souls. How is the heart inflamed in prayer and meditation? What joy and peace in believing? Is it not comfortable being in heaven? He that enjoys much of God in this life, carries heaven about him. O let this be the thing we are chiefly ambitious of, the enjoying of God in his ordinances; remember, the enjoying of God's sweet presence here, is an earnest of our enjoying him in heaven.

And that brings us to the second thing, viz.

2d, The enjoying of God in the life to come: Man's chief end is to enjoy God for ever. Before this plenary fruition of God in heaven, there must be something previous and antecedent; and that is, our being in a state of grace: We must have conformity to him in grace, before we can have communion with him in glory; grace and glory are linked and chained together; grace precedes glory, as the morning-star ushers in the sun. God will have us qualified and fitted for a state of blessedness: drunkards and swearers are not fit to enjoy God in glory; the Lord will not lay such vipers in his bosom; only the 'pure in heart shall see God:' we must first be, as the king's daughter, glorious within, before we are clothed with the robes of glory. As king Ahasuerus first caused the virgins to be purified and anointed, and they had their sweet odours to perfume them, and then they went to stand before the king, Eth. ii. 12. so must we, we must have the anointing of God, and be perfumed with the graces of the Spirit, those sweet odours, and then we shall stand before the king of heaven: now, being thus divinely qualified by grace, we shall be taken up to the mount of vision, and enjoy God for ever: this enjoying God for ever, is nothing else but to be put to a state of happiness. As the body cannot have life, but by having communion with the soul; so the soul cannot have blessedness, but by having immediate communion with God. God is the *summum bonum*, the chief good; therefore the enjoying of him is the highest felicity; he is, I say, the chief good.

1. He is an univerfal good ; *bonum in quo omnia bona*, “ A good, in which are all goods.” The excellencies of the creature are limited. A man may have health, not beauty ; learning, not parentage ; riches, not wisdom : but in God are eminently contained all excellencies : He is a good, commensurate fully to the foul ; he is a fun, a portion, an horn of falvation ; in him dwells ‘ all fulnefs,’ Col. i. 19. 2. God is an unmixed good : no condition in this life but hath its mixture ; for every drop of honey there is a drop of gall. Solomon, who gave himfelf to find out this philofopher’s ftone, to fearch out for an happinefs here below, he found vanity and vexation, Eccl. i. 2. But God is a perfect, quinteffential good. He is fweetnefs in the flower. 3. God is a fatisfying good. The foul cries out, I have enough, Pfal. xvii. 15. ‘ I fhall be fatisfied with thy likenefs.’ A man that is thirfty, bring him to the ocean, and he hath enough. If there be enough in God to fatisfy the angels, then fure, enough to fatisfy us. The foul is but finite, but God is an uncreated infinite good. And yet though God be fuch a good as doth fatisfy, yet not furfeit. Frefh joys fpring continually from God’s face ; and God is as much to be defired after millions of years by glorified fouls, as at the firft moment. There is fo much fulnefs in God as fatisfies, yet fo much fweetnefs, that the foul ftill defires ; it is fatisfaction without furfeit. 4. God is a delicious good. That which is the chief good muft ravifh the foul with pleafure ; there muft be in it fpirits of delight and quinteffence of joy ; and this is to be enjoyed only in God. *In Deo quadam dulcedine delectatur anima, immo rapitur* : The love of God drops fuch infinite fuavity into the foul as is unfpeakable and full of glory. If there be fo much delight in God, when we fee him only by faith, 1 Peter i. 8. what will the joy of vifion be, when we fhall fee him face to face ? If the faints have found fo much delight in God while they were fuffering, O then what joy and delight will they have when they are crowning ! If flames are beds of rofes, O then what will it be to lean on the bofom of Jefus ! what a bed of rofes will that be ! 5. God is a fuperlative good. He is better than any thing you can put in competition with him ; he is better than health, riches, honour. Other things maintain life, he gives life. But who would go to put any thing in balance with the Deity ? who would weigh a feather with a mountain of gold ? God excels all other things more infinitely than the fun the light of a taper. 6. God is an eternal good : He is the ancient of Days, Dan. vii. 9. yet never decays, nor waxes old. The joy he gives is eternal, the crown fadeth not away, 1 Peter v. 4. The glorified foul fhall ever be folacing itfelf in God ; it fhall be feafting on his love, and funning itfelf in the light of his countenance. We read of the river of pleafure at God’s right hand ; but will not

this in time be dried up? No, there is a fountain at the bottom which feeds it: Psal. xxxvi. 9. 'With the Lord is the fountain of life.' Thus God is the chief good; and the enjoying God for ever is the supreme felicity the soul is capable of.

1. *Use of Exhortation.* Let it be the chief end of our living to enjoy this chief good hereafter; this is that which will crown us with happiness, Austin reckons up 288 opinions among the philosophers about happiness, but all did shoot short of the mark. The highest elevation of a reasonable soul is to enjoy God for ever. It is the enjoying God that makes heaven, 1 Thess. iv. 17. 'Then shall we ever be with the Lord.' The soul trembles, as the needle in the compass, and is never at rest till it comes to God. To set out this excellent state of a glorified soul's enjoying God: 1. This enjoying of God must not be understood in a sensual manner; we must not conceive any carnal pleasures in heaven. The Turks in their Alcoran speak of a paradise of pleasure, where they have riches in abundance, and red wine served in golden chalices. Here is an heaven consisting of pleasures for the body; the epicures of this age would like such an heaven when they die. Though indeed the state of glory be compared to a feast, and is set out by pearls and precious stones, yet these metaphors are only to be helps to our faith, and to show us that there is super-abundant joy and felicity in the empyrean heaven; but those are not carnal, but sacred delights: as our employment shall be spiritual, it will consist in adoring and praising of God: So our enjoyment shall be spiritual, it shall consist in having the perfection of holiness, in seeing the pure face of Christ, in feeling the love of God, in conversing with heavenly spirits: these delights will be more adequate and proper for the soul, and infinitely exceed all carnal voluptuous delights. 2. We shall have a lively sense of this glorious estate. A man in a lethargy, though he be alive, yet he is as good as dead, because he is not sensible, nor doth he take any pleasure in his life; we shall have a quick and lively sense of the infinite pleasure which ariseth from enjoyment of God; we shall know ourselves to be happy, we shall reflect with joy upon our dignity and felicity; we shall taste every crumb of that sweetness, every drop of that pleasure which flows from God. 3. We shall be made able to bear a sight of that glory: we could not now bear that glory, it would overwhelm us: as a weak eye cannot behold the sun; but God will capacitate us for glory; our souls shall be so heavenly, and perfected with holiness, that they may be able to enjoy the blessed vision of God. Moses in a cleft of the rock saw the glory of God passing by, Exod. xxxiii. 21. Through that blessed rock Christ, we shall behold the beatifical sight of God. 4. This enjoyment of God shall be more than a bare contemplation of him. Some of the learned



move the question, Whether the enjoyment of God shall be only by way of contemplation? Ans. That is something, but it is but one half of heaven; there shall be a loving of God, an acquiescence in him, a tasting his sweetness; not only inspection but possession, John xvii. 24. 'That they may behold my glory;' there is inspection: Ver. 22. 'And the glory thou hast given I me, have given them;' there is possession. 'Glory shall be revealed in us,' Rom. viii. 18. not only revealed to us, but in us. To behold God's glory, there is glory revealed to us; but to partake of his glory, there is glory revealed in us. As the sponge sucks in the wine, so shall we suck in glory. There is no intermission in this state of glory. We shall not only have God's glorious presence at certain special seasons, but we shall be continually in his presence, continually under divine raptures of joy. There shall not be one minute in heaven, wherein a glorified soul may say, I do not enjoy happiness. The streams of glory are not like the water of a conduit, often stopped, that we cannot have one drop of water; but those heavenly streams of joy are continually running. O how should we despise this valley of tears, where we now are, for the mount of transfiguration! how should we long for the full enjoyment of God in paradise! Had we a sight of that land of promise, we should need patience to be content to live here any longer.

2. Let this be a spur to duty. How diligent and zealous should we be in glorifying God, that we come at last to enjoy him? If Tully, Demosthenes, Plato, who had but the dim watch-light of reason to see by, and did but fancy an elysium and happiness after this life, did take such Herculean pains to enjoy it; O then how should Christians, who have the light of scripture to see by, bestir themselves, that they may attend at the eternal fruition of God and glory! If any thing may make us rise off our bed of sloth, and serve God with all our might, it should be this; the hope of our near enjoyment of God for ever. What made Paul so active in the sphere of religion? 1 Cor. xv. 10. 'I laboured more abundantly than they all.' His obedience did not move slow, as the sun on the dial; but swift, as the sun in the firmament. Why was he so zealous in glorifying God, but that he might at last centre and terminate in him? 1 Thess. iv. 17. 'Then shall we be ever with the Lord.'

3d, *Use of Consolation.* Let this comfort the godly in all the present miseries they feel. Thou complaineest, Christian, thou dost not enjoy thyself, fears disquiet thee, wants perplex thee; in the day thou canst not enjoy ease, in the night thou canst not enjoy sleep: thou dost not enjoy the comforts of thy life. Let this revive thee, that shortly thou shalt enjoy God, and then shalt have more than thou canst ask or think; thou shalt have



angels joy, glory without intermission and expiration. We shall never enjoy ourselves fully, till we enjoy God eternally.

## OF THE SCRIPTURES.

**Q. II.** *WHAT rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?*

*Ans.* The word of God (which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament) is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

2 Tim. iii. 16. 'All scripture is given by the inspiration of God,' &c. By scripture is understood the sacred book of God. —It is given by divine inspiration; that is, the scripture is not the contrivance of man's brain, but of a divine original. The image of Diana was had in veneration by the Ephesians, because they did suppose it fell from Jupiter, Acts xix. 35. This book then of the holy scripture is to be highly revered and esteemed, because we are sure it came from heaven, 2 Pet. i. 21. The two Testaments are the two lips by which God hath spoken to us.

**Q.** *How doth it appear that the scriptures have a Jus Divinum, a divine authority stamped upon them?*

*Ans.* Because the Old and New Testament are the foundation of all religion. If their divinity cannot be proved, the foundation is gone on which we build our faith. I shall therefore endeavour to evince this great truth, that the scriptures are the very word of God. I wonder whence the scriptures should come, if not from God. 1. And bad men could not be the authors of scripture; would their minds be employed in indicting such holy lines? would they declare so fiercely against sin? 2. Good men could not be the authors of scripture. Could they write in such a strain? or could it stand with their grace to counterfeit God's name, and put, *Thus saith the Lord*, to a book of their own devising? 3. Nor could any angel in heaven be the author of scripture, because, 1. The angels pry and search into the abyss of gospel mysteries, 1 Pet. i. 12. which implies their nescience of some parts of scripture; and sure they cannot be authors of that book which themselves do not fully understand. Besides, 2. What angel in heaven durst be so arrogant as to personate God, and say, 'I create,' Isa. lxv. 17. and 'I the Lord have said it,' Numb. xiv. 35. So that it is evident, the pedigree of scripture is sacred, and it could come from none but God himself.

Not to speak of the harmonious consent of all the parts of

scripture, there are seven cogent arguments which may evince it to be the word of God.

1. By its antiquity: It is of ancient standing. The grey hairs of scripture make it venerable. No human histories extant reach further than since Noah's flood; but the holy scripture relates matters of fact that have been from the beginning of the world; it writes of things before time. Now, that is a sure rule of Tertullian, "*That which is of the greatest antiquity, id verum quod primum*, is to be received as most sacred and authentic."

2. We may know the scriptures to be the word of God, by the miraculous preservation of it in all ages. The holy scriptures are the richest jewel that Christ hath left; and the church of God hath kept these public records of heaven, that they have not been lost. The word of God hath never wanted enemies to oppose, and, if possible, to extirpate it. They have given out a law concerning scripture, as Pharaoh did the midwives concerning the Hebrew women's children, to strangle it in the birth; yet God hath preserved this blessed book inviolable to this day. The devil and his agents have been blowing at scripture-light, but could never prevail to blow it out; a clear sign that it was lighted from heaven. Nor hath the church of God, in all revolutions and changes, only kept the scripture that it should not be lost, but that it should not be depraved. The letter of scripture hath been preserved, without any corruption, in the original tongue. The scriptures were not corrupted before Christ's time, for then Christ would never have sent the Jews to the scriptures; but he sends them to the scriptures, John v. 39. 'Search the scriptures.' Christ knew these sacred springs were not muddled with human fancies.

4. The scripture appears to be the word of God, by the matter contained in it. (1.) By its profundity. The mystery of scripture is so abstruse and profound, that no man or angel could have known it, had it not been divinely revealed. That eternity should be born; that he who thunders in the heavens should cry in the cradle; that he who rules the stars, should suck the breasts; that the Prince of life should die; that the Lord of glory should be put to shame; that sin should be punished to the full, yet pardoned to the full; who could ever have conceived of such a mystery, had not the scripture been the oracle to reveal it to us? So, for the doctrine of the resurrection, that the same body which is crumbled into a thousand pieces, should rise *idem numero*, the same individual body, (for else it were a creation, not a resurrection.) How could such a sacred riddle, above all human disquisition, be known, had not the scripture made a discovery of it? (2.) By its purity. It is, for the matter of it, so full of goodness, justice and sanctity, that it could be

breathed from none but from God ; the holiness of it shews it to be of God, it bears his very image. The scripture is compared to silver refined seven times, Psal. xii. 6. This book of God hath no errata in it : it is a beam of the Sun of Righteousness, a crystal stream flowing from the fountain of life. All laws and edicts of men have had their corruptions, but the word of God hath not the least tincture, it is of a meridian splendor, Psal. cxix. 140. ' Thy word is very pure,' like wine that comes from the grape, which is not mixed nor adulterated. It is so pure, that it purifies every thing else, John xvii. 17. ' Sanctify them through thy truth.' The scripture presseth holiness, so as never any book did : it bids us ' live soberly, righteously, godly,' Tit. ii. 12. Soberly, in acts of temperance ; righteously, in acts of justice ; godly, in the acts of zeal and devotion. It commends to us, ' whatever is just, lovely, and of good report,' Phil. iv. 8. This sword of the Spirit, Eph. vi. 17. cuts down vice. Out of this tower of scripture is thrown down a millstone upon the head of sin. The scripture is the royal law, which commands not only the actions, but affections ; it binds the heart to its good behaviour. Where is there such holiness to be found, as is digged out of this sacred mine ? who could be the author of such a book but God himself ?

4. That the scripture is the word of God, is evident by its predictions ; it prophesieth of things to come. This shows the voice of God speaking in it ; it was foretold by the prophet, ' A virgin shall conceive,' Isa. vii. 14. and, the ' Messiah shall be cut off,' Dan. ix. 26. The scripture foretels things that should fall out many ages and centuries after ; as how long Israel should serve in the iron furnace, and the very day of their deliverance, Exod. xii. 41. ' At the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day, it came to pass, that the host of the Lord went out of Egypt.' This prediction of future things, merely contingent, and not depending upon natural causes, is a clear demonstration of its divine original.

5. The impartiality of those men of God, who wrote the scriptures ; they do not spare to set down their own failings. What man that writes an history, would black his own face, viz. record those things of himself, that might stain his reputation ; Moses records his own impatience when he struck the rock, and tells us, therefore he could not enter into the land of promise. David writes of his own adultery and bloodshed, which stands as a blot in his scutcheon to succeeding ages. Peter relates his own pusillanimity in denying Christ. Jonah sets down his own passions, ' I do well to be angry to the death.' Surely, had not their pen been guided by God's own hand, they would never have written that which did reflect dishonour upon themselves. Men do usually rather hide their blemishes, than



publish them to the world : but these penmen of holy scripture eclipse their own name ; they take away all the glory from themselves, and give the glory to God.

6. The mighty power and efficacy the word hath had upon the souls and consciences of men. (1.) It hath changed their hearts. (2.) Some by reading of scripture have been turned into other men, they have been made holy and gracious. By reading other books the heart may be warmed, but by reading this book it is transformed, 2 Cor. iii. 3. ‘ Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.’ The word was copied out into their hearts, and they were become Christ’s epistle, so that others might read Christ in them. If you should set a seal upon marble, and it should make an impression upon the marble, and leave a print behind, there were a strange virtue in that seal : so, when the seal of the word leaves a heavenly print of grace upon the heart, there must needs be a power going along with that word no less than divine. (2.) It hath comforted their hearts. When Christians have sitted by the rivers weeping, the word hath dropped as honey, and sweetly revived them. A Christian’s chief comfort is drawn out of these wells of salvation ; Rom. xv. 4. ‘ That we thro’ comfort of the scriptures might have hope.’ When a poor soul hath been ready to faint, he hath had nothing to comfort him but a scripture cordial. When he hath been sick, the word hath revived him ; 2 Cor. iv. 17. ‘ Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.’ When he hath been deserted, the word hath dropped in the golden oil of joy into his heart, Lam. iii. 31. ‘ The Lord will not cast off for ever.’ He may change his providence, not his purpose ; he may have the look of an enemy, but the heart of a father. Thus the word hath a power in it to comfort the heart ; Psal. cxix. 50. ‘ This is my comfort in mine affliction ; for thy word hath quickened me.’ As the spirits are conveyed through the arteries of the body ; so divine comforts are conveyed through the promises of the word. Now the scriptures having such an exhilarating heart-comforting power in them, it shows clearly, that they are of God, and it is he that hath put this milk of consolation into these breasts.

7. The great miracles wherewith the Lord hath confirmed scripture. Miracles were used by Moses, Elijah, Christ, and continued many years after by the apostles, to confirm the verity of the holy scriptures. As props are set under weak vines, so these miracles were set under the weak faith of men, that if they would not believe the writings of the word, yet they might believe the miracles. We read of God’s dividing the waters, making a causeway in the sea for his people to go over, the iron



swimming, the oil increasing by pouring out, Christ's making wine of water, his curing the blind, and raising the dead : thus God hath set a seal to the truth and divinity of the scripture by miracles.

*Object.* *The Papists indeed cannot deny but that the scripture is divine and sacred ; but they affirm, that quoad nos, with respect to us, it receives its divine authority from the church, and they bring that scripture, 1 Tim. iii. 15. where the church is said to be the ground and pillar of truth.*

*Ans.* It is true, the church is the pillar of truth ; but it doth not therefore follow, that the scripture hath its authority from the church. The king's proclamation is fixed on a pillar, the pillar holds it out, that all may read, but the proclamation doth not receive its authority from the pillar, but from the king ; so the church holds forth the scriptures, but they do not receive their authority from the church, but from God. If the word of God should be divine because the church holds it forth, then it will follow, that our faith is to be built upon the church, and not upon the word ; contrary to that, Eph. ii. 20. ' Built upon the foundation (that is the doctrine) of the apostles and prophets .

*Qu.* *Are all the books in the Bible of the same divine authority ?*

*Ans.* Those which we call canonical.

*Qu.* *Why are the scriptures called canonical ?*

*Ans.* Because the word is a rule of faith, a canon to direct our lives. The word is the judge of controversies, the rock of infallibility ; that only is to be received for truth, which is consonant to, and agrees with scripture, as the transcript with the original. All maxims in divinity are to be brought to the touchstone of scripture, as all measures are brought to the standard.

*Qu.* *Are the scriptures a complete rule ?*

*Ans.* The scripture is a full and perfect canon, containing in it all things necessary to salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 15. ' From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.' It shews the *Credenda*, what we are to believe ; and *Agenda*, what we are to practise. It gives us an exact model of religion, and perfectly instructs us in the deep things of God. The Papists therefore make themselves guilty, who go to seek out scripture with their traditions, to which they equallize it. The council of Trent saith, That the traditions of the church of Rome are to be received *pari pietatus affectu*, with the same devotion that scripture is to be received with ; so bring themselves under that curse, Rev. xxii. 18. ' If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.'

*Q.* *What is the main scope and end of scripture ?*

*Ans.* To chalk out a way to salvation. It makes a clear discovery of Christ, John xx. 31. 'These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing ye might have life through his name.' The design of the word is to be an examine, whereby our grace is to be tried; a sea-mark to show us what rocks we are to avoid. The word is to sublimiate and quicken our affections: it is to be our directory and consolatory; it is to waft us over to the land of promise.

*Q.* Who shall have the power of interpreting scriptures?

The Papists do assert, that it is in the power of the church. If you ask who they mean by the church, they say, the Pope who is head of it, and he is infallible; so Bellarmine. But that assertion is false, because many of the Popes have been ignorant and vicious, as Platina affirms, who writes of the lives of Popes: Pope Liberius was an Arian, and Pope John XII. denied the immortality of the soul; therefore Popes are not fit interpreters of scripture: who then?

*Ans.* The scripture is to be its own interpreter, or rather the Spirit speaking in it; nothing can cut the diamond but the diamond; nothing can interpret scripture, but scripture; the sun best discovers itself by its own beams; the scripture interprets itself in easy places to the understanding. But the question is concerning hard places of scripture, where the weak Christian is ready to wade beyond his depth, who shall interpret here?

*Ans.* In the church, God hath appointed some to expound and interpret scripture; therefore he hath given gifts to men; the several pastors of churches, like bright constellations, give light to dark scriptures, Mal. ii. 7. 'The priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth.'

*Q.* But this is to pin our faith upon men?

*Ans.* We are to receive nothing for current but what is agreeable to the word; as God hath given to his ministers gifts for the interpreting obscure places, so he hath given to his people so much of the spirit of discerning, that they can tell (at least in things necessary to salvation) what is consonant to scripture, and what is not; 1 Cor. xii. 10. 'To one is given a spirit of prophecy, to another discerning of spirits:' God hath endued his people with such a measure of wisdom and discretion, that they can discern between truth and error, and judge what is sound; and what is spurious, Acts xvii. 11. 'The Bereans searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so:' They weighed the doctrine they heard, whether it was agreeable to scripture, though Paul and Silas were their teachers, 2 Tim. iii. 16.

*Uſe* 1. See the wonderful goodness of God, who, besides the light of nature, hath committed to us the sacred scriptures.

The heathens are enveloped with ignorance, Psal. clxvii. 20. 'As for his judgments they have not known them.' They have the oracles of the Sybils, but not the writings of Moses and the apostles. How many live in the region of death, where this bright star of scripture never appeared! We have this blessed book of God to resolve all our cases, to chalk out a way of life to us. John xiv. 22. 'Lord, how is it thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?'

(2.) Seeing God hath given us his written word to be our directory, this takes away all excuses from men. No man can say, I went wrong for want of a light; no, God hath given thee his word as a lamp to thy feet; therefore now, if thou goest wrong, thou dost it wilfully. No man can say, If I had known the will of God, I would have obeyed; no, thou art inexcusable, O man, God hath given thee a rule to go by, he hath written his law with his own finger; therefore now, if thou obeyest not, thou hast no apology left. If a master leaves his mind in writing with his servant, and tells him what work he will have done, yet the servant neglects the work, that servant is left without excuse, John xv. 22. 'Now you have no cloke for your sins.'

U/e 2. Is all scripture of divine inspiration? is it a book made by God himself? Then this reproveth, 1. The Papists, who take away part of scripture, and so clip the King of heaven's coin; they expunge the second commandment, out of their catechisms, because it makes against images: it is usual with them, if they meet with any thing in scripture which they dislike, either they put a false gloss upon it, or, if that will not do, pretend it is corrupted; these are like Ananias, who kept back part of the money, Acts v. 2. so they keep back part of the scripture from the people. This is an high affront to God, to deface and obliterate any part of his word: by this they bring themselves under that premunire, Rev. xxii. 9. 'If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.' Is all scripture of divine inspiration? 2. It condemns the Antinomians, that lay aside the Old Testament as useless, and out of date; they call them Old-Testament Christians: God hath stamped a divine majesty upon both Testaments; and till they can shew me where God hath given a repeal to the Old, it stands in force. The two Testaments are the two wells of salvation; the Antinomians would stop up one of these wells, they would dry up one of the breasts of scripture. There is much gospel in the Old Testament; the comforts of the gospel in the New Testament have their rise from the Old. The great promise of the Messiah is in the Old Testament, 'A virgin shall conceive and bear a son:—Nay, I say more, the moral law, in some parts of it, speaks gospel, 'I am the Lord thy God;' here is the pure wine



of the gospel. The saint's great charter, where God promiseth to 'sprinkle clean water upon them, and put his Spirit within them,' is to be found primarily in the Old Testament, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. So that they who take away the Old Testament, do, as Samson, pull down the pillars, they would take away the pillars of a Christian's comfort. 3. It condemns the Enthusiasts, who, pretending the Spirit, lay aside the whole Bible; they say the scripture is a dead letter and they live above it. What imprudence is this? Till we are above sin, we shall not be above scripture. Let not men talk of a revelation from the Spirit, suspect it to be an imposture; the Spirit of God acts regularly, it works in and by the word; and he that pretends to a new light, which is either above the word, or contrary to it, abuseth both himself and the Spirit: his light is borrowed from him who transforms himself into an angel of light. 4. It condemns the flighters of scripture: such are they, who can go whole weeks and months and never read the word. They lay it aside as rusty armour; they prefer a play or romance before scripture, the *magnalia legis* are to them *minutula*. O how many can be looking their faces in a glass all the morning, but their eyes begin to be sore, when they look upon a Bible! heathens die in the want of scripture, and these in the contempt of it. They surely must needs go wrong who slight their guide; such as lay the reins upon the neck of their lusts, and never use the curbing bit of scripture to check them, are carried to hell, and never stop. 5. It condemns the abusers of scripture: (1.) Who do mud and poison this pure crystal fountain with their corrupt glosses; who wrest scripture, 2 Pet. iii. 16. The Greek word is, they set it upon the rack; they give wrong interpretations of it, not comparing scripture with scripture: as the Antinomians pervert that scripture, Numb. xxiii. 21. 'He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob;' hence they infer, God's people may take liberty in sin, because God sees no sin in them. It is true, God sees no sin in his people with an eye of revenge, but he sees it with an observation. He sees not sin in them, so as to damn them; but he sees it, so as to be angry, and severely to punish them. Did not David find it so, when he cried out of his broken bones? In like manner the Arminians wrest scripture, John v. 40. 'Ye will not come to me;' here they bring in free will. This text shows 1. How willing God is that we should have life; 2. That sinners may do no more than they do; they may improve the talents God hath given them: but it doth not prove the power of free-will, for it is contrary to that scripture, John vi. 44. 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.' These therefore writing the text so hard, as they make the blood come; they do not compare scripture with scripture. (2.) Who do jest with scripture?

When they are sad, they take the scripture as their lute or minstrel to play with, and so drive away the sad spirit; as that drunkard I have read of, who, having drunk off his cups, called to some of his fellows, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. In the fear of God, take heed of this. Eusebius tells us of one, who took a piece of scripture to make a jest of, who was presently struck with a frenzy and ran mad. And, it is a saying of Luther, *Quos Deus vult perdere, &c.* "Whom God intends to destroy, he gives them leave to play with scripture."

*Use 3d.* Of exhortation. If the scripture be of divine inspiration, then be exhorted, 1. To study the scripture; it is a copy of God's will: be scripture-men, Bible-christians. "I adore the fulness of scripture," saith Tertullian. In the book of God are scattered many truths as so many pearls, John v. 36. 'Search the scriptures:' Search as for a vein of silver: this blessed book will fill your head with knowledge, and your heart with grace. God wrote the two tables with his own fingers; and if God took pains to write, well may we take pains to read. Appollos was mighty in the scriptures, Acts xviii. 24. The word is our *magna charta* for heaven; shall we be ignorant of our charter; Col. iii. 19. 'Let the word of God dwell in you richly.' The memory must be a table-book where the word is written. To make us read the word, consider, 1. There is majesty sparkling in every line of scripture: take but one instance, Isa. lxiii. 1. 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.' Behold here a lofty magnificent style? What angel could speak after this manner? Junius was converted by reading one verse of John: he beheld a majesty in it beyond all human rhetoric. 2. There is a melody in scripture. This is that blessed harp which drives away sadness of spirit: hear the sounding of this harp a little, 1 Tim. i. 15. 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;' he took not only our flesh upon him but our sins. And Mat. xi. 28. 'Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' How sweetly doth this harp of scripture sound, what heavenly music doth it make in the ears of a distressed sinner, especially when the finger of God's Spirit toucheth upon this instrument? 3. There is divinity in scripture. It contains the marrow and quintessence of religion: The scripture is a rock of diamonds, a mystery of piety; the lips of scripture have grace poured into them. The scripture speaks of faith, self-denial, and all the graces, which, as a chain of pearl adorn a Christian. The scripture excites to holiness, it treats of another world, it gives a

prospect of eternity : Oh then search the scripture ! make the word familiar to you. Had I the tongue of angels, I could not sufficiently set forth the excellency of scripture : it is a spiritual optic-glass, in which we behold God's glory : it is the tree of life, the oracle of wisdom, the rule of manners, the heavenly seed of which the new creature is formed, James i. 18. " The two Testaments (saith Austin) are the two breasts which every Christian must suck, that he may get spiritual nourishment." The leaves of the tree of life were for healing, Rev. xxii. 2. So these holy leaves of scripture, like those leaves, are for the healing of our souls. The scripture is profitable for all things : if we are deserted, here is spiced wine that cheers the heavy heart ; if we are pursued by Satan, here is the sword of the Spirit to resist him : if we are diseased with sin's leprosy, here are the waters of the sanctuary, both to cleanse and cure. Oh then, search the scriptures ! there is no danger in tasting this tree of knowledge : there was a penalty laid at first, that we might not taste of the tree of knowledge, Gen. iii. 17. ' In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die : ' but there is no danger of plucking this tree of holy scripture ; if we do not eat of this tree of knowledge, we shall surely die : oh, then, read the scriptures !—Time may come, when the scriptures may be kept from us.

*Q. How should we so search the scriptures, as to find life ?*

*Ans.* 1. Read the Bible with reverence ; think every line you read God is speaking to you. The ark wherein the law was put was overlaid with pure gold, and was carried on bars, that the Levites might not touch it, Exod. xxv. 14. And why was this, but to breed in the people reverence to the law ? 2. Read with seriousness. It is matter of life and death : by this word you must be tried ; conscience and scripture are the jury God will proceed by, in judging of you. 3. Read the word with affection. Get your hearts quickened with the word ; go to it to fetch fire, Luke xxiv. 32. ' Did not our hearts burn within us ? ' Labour that the word may not only be a lamp to direct, but a fire to warm. Read the scripture, not only as an history, but as a love-letter sent to you from God, which may affect your hearts. 4. Pray that the same Spirit that wrote the word, may assist you in the reading of it ; that God's Spirit would shew you the wonderful things of his law. Go near, saith God to Philip, ' join thyself to this chariot,' Acts viii. 19. So, when God's Spirit joins himself with this chariot of the word, then it becomes effectual.

2. Be exhorted to prize the word written, Job xxiii. 12. David valued the word more precious than gold. What would the martyrs have given for a leaf of the Bible ! The word is the field where Christ the pearl of price is hid. In this sacred



mine we dig, not for a wedge of gold, but a weight of glory.

1. The scripture is a sacred collyrium, or eye-salve to illuminate us. Prov. vi. 23. 'The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light.' The scripture is the chart and compass by which we sail to the new Jerusalem. The scripture is a sovereign cordial in all distresses. What are the promises but the water of life to renew fainting spirits? Is it sin troubles? There is a scripture cordial, Psal. lxxv. 3. 'Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions thou shalt purge them away;' or as it is in the Hebrew, 'thou shalt cover them.' Is it outward afflictions disquiet thee? There is a scriptural-cordial, Pl. xci. 15. 'I will be with him in trouble;' not only to behold, but to uphold. Thus, as in the ark was laid up manna, promises are laid up as manna in the ark of scripture. 3. The scripture will make us wise: wisdom is above rubies; Psal. cxix. 104. 'By thy precepts I get understanding.' What made Eve so desire the tree of knowledge? Gen. iii. 6. 'It was a tree to make one wise.' The scriptures teach a man to know himself: they discover Satan's snares and stratagems, 2 Cor. ii. 11. They make one wise to salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 15. O then highly prize the scriptures! I read of Queen Elizabeth, at her coronation, she received the Bible presented to her, with both her hands, and kissing it, laid it to her breast, saying, that that book had ever been her chiefest delight.

3. If the scripture is of divine inspiration, believe the word. The Romans, that they might gain credit to their laws, reported that they were inspired by the gods at Rome. O give credence to the word! it is breathed from God's own mouth. Hence ariseth all the profaneness of men, they do not believe the scripture, Is. liii. 1. 'Who hath believed our report?' Did you believe the glorious rewards the scripture speaks of, would you not give diligence to make your election sure? Did you believe the infernal torments the scripture speaks of, would not this put you into a cold sweat, and cause a trembling at heart for sin? But people are in part Atheists, they give but little credit to the word, therefore they are so impious, and draw such dark shadows in their lives. Learn to realize scripture, get your hearts wrought to a firm belief of it. Some think, if God should send an angel from heaven, and declare his mind, then they should rather believe him, or if he should send one from the damned, and preach the torments of hell all in flames, then they would believe. But Luke xvi. 31. 'If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one arose from the dead.' God is wise, and he thinks this way fittest to make his mind known to us by writing; and such as will not be convinced by the word, shall be judged by the word. The belief of the scripture is of high importance: it is the be-

belief of scripture, that will enable us to resist temptation ; 1 John ii. 14. ‘ The word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.’ It is the belief of scripture conduceth much to our sanctification ; therefore these two are put together, sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, 2 Thess. ii. 13. If the word written be not believed, it is like writing on the water, which takes no impression.

4. Love the word written : Ps. cxix. 97. ‘ O how love I thy law !’ “ Lord (saith Augustine) let the holy scriptures be my chaste delight.” Chrysostom compares the scripture to a garden ; every truth is a fragrant flower, which we should wear, not on our bosom, but our heart. David tasted the word ‘ sweeter than honey and the honey-comb,’ Psal. xix. 10. There is that in scripture may breed delight : it shows us the way to riches, Deut. xxviii. 5. Prov. iii. 10. To long life, Ps. xxxiv. 12. To a kingdom, Heb. xii. 28. Well then, may we count those the sweetest hours which are spent in reading the holy scriptures : well may we say with the prophet, Jer. xv. 16. ‘ Thy words were found, and I did eat them ; and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart.’

5. Conform to scripture, let us lead scripture-lives. O that the Bible might be seen printed in our lives ! do what the word commands. Obedience is an excellent way of commenting upon the Bible, Psal. lxxxvi. 11. ‘ I will walk in thy truth.’ Let the word be the sun-dial by which you set your life. What are we the better for having the scripture, if we do not direct all our speeches and actions according to it ? What is a carpenter the better to have his rule about him, if he sticks it at his back, and never makes use of it for the measuring and squaring his work ? So, what are we the better for the rule of the word, if we do not make use of it, and regulate our lives by it ? How many swerve and deviate from the rule ? The word teacheth to be sober and temperate, but they are drunk ; to be chaste and holy, but they are profane ; they go quite from the rule. What a dishonour is this to religion, for men to live in contradiction to scripture ! The word is called a ‘ light to our feet.’ Ps. cxix. 105. It is not only a light to our eyes to mend our sight, but to our feet to mend our walk. O let us lead Bible conversations.

6. Contend for scripture. Though we should not be of contentious spirits, yet we ought to contend for the word of God ; this jewel is too precious to be parted with ; Prov. iv. 13. ‘ Keep her, for she is thy life.’ The scripture is beset with enemies ; heretics fight against it, we must therefore ‘ contend for the faith once delivered to the saints,’ Jude 3. The scripture is our book of evidences for heaven ; shall we part with our evidences ! The saints of old were both advocates and martyrs

for truth; they would hold fast scripture, though it were with the loss of their lives.

7. Be thankful to God for the scriptures. What a mercy is it that God hath not only acquainted us what his will is, but that he hath made it known by writing! In the Old times God did reveal his mind by revelations, but the word written is a surer way of knowing God's mind than by revelation, 2 Pet. i. 17. 'This voice which came from heaven we heard, we have also a more sure word of prophecy.' The devil is God's ape, and he can transform himself into an angel of light; he can deceive with false revelations: as I have heard of one who had, as he thought, a revelation from God to sacrifice his child, as Abraham had: whereupon he following this impulse of the devil, did kill his child. Thus Satan oft deceives people with delusion, instead of divine revelations; therefore we are to be thankful to God for revealing his mind to us by writing: we have a more sure word of prophecy. We are not left under a doubtful suspense that we should not know what to believe, but we have an infallible rule to go by. The scripture is our polestar to direct us to heaven, it shews us every step we are to take; when we go wrong, it instructs us; when we go right it comforts us; and it is matter of thankfulness, that the scriptures are made intelligible, by being translated.

8. Adore God's distinguishing grace, if you have felt the power and authority of the word upon your conscience; if you can say as David, Psal. cxix. 50. 'Thy word hath quickened me.' Christian, bless God that he hath not only given thee his word to be a rule of holiness, but his grace to be a principle of holiness: bless God that he hath not only written his word, but sealed it upon thy heart, and made it effectual. Canst thou say it is of divine inspiration, because thou hast felt it to be of lively operation? O free grace! that God should send out his word, and heal thee; that he should heal thee, and not others? that the same scripture, which is to them a dead letter, should be to thee a favour of life.



## THAT THERE IS A GOD.

Q. III. *WHAT do the scriptures principally teach?*

*Ans.* The scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Q. *What is God?*

*Ans.* God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in



his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Here is, 1. Something implied, That there is a God. 2. Expressed, That he is a Spirit. 3. What kind of Spirit.

1. Implied, That there is a God: The question, *What is God?* takes it for granted that there is a God; the belief of God's essence is the foundation of all religious worship, Heb. xi. 6. 'He that comes to God, must believe that he is.' There must be a first cause, which gives a being and existence to all things besides. We come to know that there is a God, 1. By the book of nature, the notion of a Deity is engraven on man's heart, it is demonstrable by the light of nature. I think it hard for a man to be a natural Atheist: he may wish there were no God, he may dispute against a Deity, but he cannot in his judgment believe there is no God, unless by accumulated sin his conscience be seared, and he hath such a lethargy upon him, that he hath sinned away his very sense and reason. 2. We come to know that there is a God by his works, and this is so evident a demonstration of a Godhead, that the most atheistical spirits, when they have considered these works of God, have been forced to acknowledge some wise and supreme power the maker of these things; as it is reported of Galen and others. (1.) We will begin with the greater world, (1.) The creation of the glorious fabric of heaven and earth; sure there must be some architect or first cause, the world could not make itself; who could hang the earth on nothing, but the great God? Who could provide such rich furniture for the heavens, the glorious constellations, the firmament bespangled with such glittering lights? All this speaks a Deity: we may see God's glory blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars. Who could give the earth its clothing, cover it with grass and corn, adorn it with flowers, enrich it with gold? Only God, Job xxviii. 4. Who but God could make the sweet music in the heavens, cause the angels to join in concert, and sound forth the praises of their Maker? Job xxxviii. 7. 'When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.' If a man should go into a far country, and see stately edifices there, he would never imagine that these could build themselves, but that some greater power built them: to imagine that the work of the creation was not framed by God, is as if we should conceive a curious landscape to be drawn by a pencil without the hand of a limner; Acts xvii. 24. 'God that made the world, and all things therein.' To create, is proper to the Deity. 2. The wise government of all things, evinces there is a God: God is the great Superintendent of the world, he holds the golden reins of government in his hand, guiding all things most regularly and harmoniously to their proper end; who that eyes providence, but must be

forced to acknowledge there is a God? Providence is the queen and governess of the world; it is the hand that turns the wheel of the whole creation: providence sets the sun its race, the sea its bounds. If God should not guide the world, things would run into disorder and confusion: when one looks on a clock, and sees the motion of the wheels, the striking of the hammer, the hanging of the plummet, he would say, there were some artificer did make it, and put it into that order: so, when we see the excellent order and harmony in the universe, the sun, that great luminary, dispensing its light and heat to the world, without which, the world were but a grave or a prison; the rivers sending forth their silver streams to refresh the bodies of men, and prevent a drought; and every creature acting within its sphere, and keeping its due bounds; we must needs acknowledge there is a God, who wisely orders and governs all these things. Who could set this great army of the creatures in their several ranks and squadrons, and keep them in their constant march, but He, whose name is THE LORD OF HOSTS? And as God doth wisely dispose all things in the whole regiment of the creatures, so, by his power, he doth support them: did God suspend and withdraw his influence never so little, the wheels of the creation would unpin, and the axle-tree break asunder.

(3.) The motion of the creatues: all motion, as the philosophers say, is from something that is unmoveable. As for example, the elements are moved by the influence and motion of the heavenly bodies; the sun and moon, and these planets, are moved by the highest orb, called *Primum Mobile*: now, if one should ask, Who moves that highest orb, or the first mover of the planets? sure it can be no other hand but God himself.

(2.) Let us speak of Man, who is a microcosm or lesser world: the excellent contexture and frame of his body, which is wrought curiously as with needle-work, Psal. cxxxix. 15. 'I was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth:' and the endowment of this body with a noble soul; who but God could make such an union of different substances, flesh and spirit; in him we live, and move, and have our being. The quick acute motion of every part of the body, shews that there is a God: we may see something of him in the sparkling of the eye: and if the cabinet of the body be so curiously wrought, what is the jewel? The soul hath a celestial brightness in it; as Damascene saith, "It is a diamond set in a ring of clay." What noble faculties is the soul endowed with? Understanding, Will, Affections, which are a glass of the Trinity, as Plato speaks. The matter of the soul is spiritual, it is a divine sparkle lighted from heaven; and being spiritual, is immortal, as Scaliger notes; *anima non senescit*, the soul doth not wax old, it lives for ever: and who could create a soul ennobled with such rare angelical properties,

but God? We must needs say as the Psalmist, 'It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves,' Psal. c. 3.

2. We may prove a Deity by our conscience. Conscience is God's deputy or vicegerent. Conscience is a witness of a Deity: if there were no Bible to tell us there is a God, yet conscience might. Conscience, as the apostle saith, 'either accuseth,' or 'excuseth,' Rom. ii. 15. Conscience acts in order to an higher judicatory. 1. Natural conscience, being kept free from gross sin excuseth. When a man doth virtuous actions, lives soberly and righteously, observes the golden maxim, doing to others as he would have them to do to him; then conscience approves, and saith, Well done: conscience, like a bee, gives honey. 2. Natural conscience in the wicked doth accuse: when men go against the light of conscience, then they feel the worm of conscience. *Eheu quis intus scorpio?* Sen. Conscience, being sinned against, spits fire in men's faces, fills them with shame and horror: when the sinner sees an hand-writing on the wall of conscience, his countenance is changed. Many have hanged themselves to quiet their conscience. Tiberius the emperor, a bloody man, felt the lashes of his conscience; he was so haunted with that fury, that he told the Senate, he suffered death daily. And what is it should put a man's conscience into such an agony, but the impression of a Deity, and the thoughts of coming before God's tribunal? Those who are above all human laws, yet are subject to the checks of their own conscience. And it is observable, the nearer the wicked approach to death, the more they are terrified, and conscience gives a louder alarm to them; and whence is this, but from the apprehension of judgment approaching? The soul, being sensible of its immortal nature, trembles at him, who never ceaseth to live, and therefore will never cease to punish.

3. That their is a God, appears by the consent of nations, by the universal vote and suffrage of all. *Nulla gens tam barbara cui non insideat hæc persuasio Deum esse.* Tully: No nation so barbarous, saith Tully, as not to believe there is a God. Though the heathen did mistake in their devotion, they did not worship the true God, yet they worshipped a god. They set up an altar, 'To the unknown God.' Acts xvii. 22. They knew a God should be worshipped, though they knew not the God whom they worshipped. Some did worship Jupiter, some Neptune, some Mars; rather than not to worship something, they would worship any thing.

4. That there is a God, appears by his prediction of future things. He who can foretel things which shall surely come to pass, is the true God: God foretold, that a virgin should conceive; he prefixed the time when the Messiah should be cut off, Dan. ix. 26. He foretold the captivity of the Jews in Baby-



lon, and who should be their deliverer, Isa. xlv. 1. This is such a strong argument to prove a Deity, as God himself useth it to prove he is the true God, and that all the gods of the heathens were fictions and nullities, Isa. xli. 22. *Testimonium divinitatis est veritas divinationis*, Tertull. To foretel things contingent, and which depend upon no natural causes, is proper to a Deity.

5. That there is a God, appears by God's unlimited power and sovereignty. He who can work, and none hinder him, is the true God : but God can do so, Isa. xliii. 13. 'I will work, and who shall let it.' Nothing can hinder action but some superior power; but there is no power above God : all power that is, is by him, therefore all power is under him : he hath a 'mighty arm,' Psal. lxxxix. 13. He sees the designs men drive on against him, and plucks off their chariot-wheels; he maketh diviners mad, Isa. xlv. 25. He cutteth off the spirit of princes : he bridled the sea, gives check to the leviathan, binds the devil in chains; he acts according to his pleasure, he doth what he will; I will work, and who shall let it.

6. There are devils, therefore there is a God. Atheists cannot deny but there are devils, and then they must grant there is a God. We read of divers possessed with the devil. The devils are called in scripture, Hairy Ones, because they often appeared in the form of goats or satyrs. Gerson, in his book *de probatione spirituum*, tells us how Satan on a time appeared to an holy man in a most glorious manner, professing himself to be Christ: the old man answered, "I desire not to see my Saviour here in this desert, it shall suffice me to see him in heaven." Now, if there be a devil, then there is a God. Socrates an heathen, when he was accused at his death, confessed, that, as he thought, there was a *malus genius*, an evil spirit, so he thought there was a good.

Use 1. Seeing there is a God, this reproves such atheistical fools as deny it. Epicurus denied there was a providence, saying, that all things fell out by chance, Diagoras. He that saith there is no God, is the wickedest creature that is; he is worse than a thief, who doth but take away our goods from us, but the Atheist would take away our God from us, John. xx. 'They have taken away my Lord.' So we may say of Atheists, they would take away our God from us, in whom all our hope and comfort is laid up, Psal. xiv. 1. 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.' He durst not speak it with his tongue, but said it in his heart; he wished it. Sure none can be speculative Atheists, 'The devils believe and tremble.' James ii. 16. I have read of one Arthur, a professed Atheist, who when he came to die, cried out, he was damned: but though there are few found who say, *There is no God*; yet many deny him in

their practices, Tit. i. 16. 'In works they deny him.' Cicero said of Epicurus, *verbis reliquit Deos refutavit* : The world is full of practical atheism ; most people live as if they did not believe their was a God. Durst they lie, defraud, be unclean, if they believed there were a God who would call them to an account ? If an Indian, who never heard of a God, should come among us, and have no other means to convince him of a Deity, but the lives of men in our age, surely he would be of Protagora's mind, who did hang in a doubtful suspence, and did question whether there were a God ; *utrum Dii sint non ausim affirmare*.

Use 2. Seeing there is a God, he will deal righteously, and give just rewards to men. Things seem to be carried in the world very unequally ; the wicked flourish, Ps. lxxiii. They who tempt God are delivered, Mal. iii. 15. the ripe clusters of grapes are squeezed into their cup, and, in the mean while, the godly, who weep for sin, and served God, are afflicted ; Ps. cii. 9. 'I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.' Evil men enjoy all the good, and good men endure all the evil. But seeing there is a God, he will deal righteously with men, Gen. xviii. 25. 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right ?' Offenders must come to punishment. The sinner's death-day and dooms day is a-coming ; Psal. xxxvii. 13. 'The Lord seeth that his day is coming.' While there is an hell, the wicked shall be scourged enough ; and while there is eternity, they shall lie there long enough ; and God will abundantly compensate the faithful service of his people. They shall have their white robes and crowns : Psal. lviii. 11. Verily there is a reward for the righteous ; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.' Because God is God, therefore he will give forth glorious rewards to his people.

Use 3. Seeing there is a God, woe to all such as engage this God against them ; he lives for ever to be avenged upon them, Ezek. xxii. 14. 'Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee ?' Such as pollute God's sabbath, oppose his saints, trampling the jewels in the dust ; such as live in a contradiction to God's word : these do engage the infinite majesty of heaven against them ; and how dismal will their case be ! Deut. xxxii. 1. 'If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold of judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies : I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,' &c. If it be so terrible to hear the lion roar, what is it when he begins to tear his prey ? Psal. lv. 22. 'Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces.' O that men would think of this, who go on in sin ! Shall we engage the great God against us ? God strikes slow but heavy ; Job xl. 9. 'Hast thou an arm like God ? Canst thou strike such a

blow? God is the best friend, but the worst enemy. If he can look men into their grave, how far can he throw them? 'Who knows the power of his wrath!' Psal. xc. 11. What fools are they, who, for a drop of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath! Paracelsus speaks of a phrenzy some have, which will make them die dancing: sinners go dancing to hell.

*Use 4.* Seeing there is a God, let us firmly believe this great article of our creed. What religion can there be in men, if they do not believe a Deity? 'He that cometh to God, must believe that he is.' To worship God, and pray to him, and not believe there is a God, is to put a high scorn and contempt upon God. Believe that God is the only true God; such a God as he hath revealed himself in his word, 'A lover of righteousness, and hater of wickedness,' Psal. xlv. 7. The real belief of a Deity gives life to all religious worship: the more we believe the truth and infiniteness of God, the more holy and angelical we are in our lives. Whether we are alone, or in company, God sees us: he is the heart-searcher: the belief of this would make us live always under God's eye, Psal. xvi. 8. 'I have set the Lord always before me.' The belief of a Deity would be a bridle to sin, a spur to duty; it would add wings to prayer, and oil to the lamp of our devotion. The belief of a Deity would cause dependance upon God in all our straits and exigencies; Gen. xvii. 1. 'I am God all sufficient;' a God that can supply all your wants, scatter all your fears, resolve all your doubts, conquer all your temptations; the arm of God's power can never be shrunk; he can create mercy for us, and therefore can help, and not be beholden to the creature. Did we believe there is a God, we should so depend on his providence as not to use any indirect means: we would not run ourselves into sin to rid ourselves out of trouble: 2 Kings i. 3. 'Is it not because there is not a God in Israel that ye go to inquire of Beelzebub the God of Ekron?' When men run to sinful shifts, is it not because they do not believe there is a God, or that he is all-sufficient?

2. Seeing there is a God, let us labour to get an interest in him, Ps. xlviii. 14. 'This God is our God.' Two things will comfort us, Deity and propriety; since the fall we have lost likeness to God and communion with God; let us labour to recover this lost interest, and pronounce this Shibboleth, 'My God,' Ps. xliii. 5. It is little comfort to know there is a God, unless he be ours; God offers himself to be our God, Jer. xxxi. 33. 'I will be their God.' And faith catcheth hold of the offer, it appropriates God, and makes all that is in him over to us to be ours; his wisdom to be ours, to teach us; his holiness ours to sanctify us, his spirit ours, to comfort us; his mercy ours, to



save us. To be able to say, God is mine, is more than to have all the mines of gold and silver.

3. Seeing there is a God, let us serve and worship him as God: it was an indictment brought in against them, Rom. i. 21. 'They glorified him not as a God.' 1. Let us pray to him as to a God. 'Pray with fervency,' Jam. v. 16. An 'effectual fervent prayer prevails much.' This is both the fire and the incense; without fervency it is no prayer. 2. Love him as a God, Deut. vi. 5. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.' To love him with all the heart, is to give him a precedency in our love, desire to let him have the cream of our affections; to love him not only appreciatively, but intensively, as much as we can. As the sun-beams united, in a burning-glass, burn the hotter, so all our affections should be united, that our love to God may be more ardent. 3. Obey him as a God. All creatures obey him, the stars fight his battles, the wind and sea obey him, Mark iv. 41. much more should man, whom God hath endued with a principle of reason: he is a God, and hath a sovereignty over us; therefore as we received life from him, so we must receive a law from him, and submit to his will in all things: this is to kiss him with a kiss of loyalty, and it is to glorify him as God.

## GOD IS A SPIRIT.

### Q. IV. WHAT is GOD?

*Ans.* God is a spirit.

2. The thing expressed, John iv. 24. 'God is a spirit,' God is *essentia spiritualissima*, Zanchy.

*Q.* What do you mean when you say, God is a spirit?

*Ans.* By Spirit I mean, God is an immaterial substance, of a pure, subtil, unmixed essence, not compounded of body and soul, without all extension of parts. The body is a dreggish thing: the more spiritual God's essence is, the more noble and excellent. The spirits are the more refined part of the wine.

*Q.* Wherein doth God differ from other spirits?

1. The angels are spirits.

*Ans.* We must distinguish of spirits. 1. The angels are created, God is a spirit uncreated. 2. The angels are spirits, but they are finite, and capable of being annihilated; the same power which made them, is able to reduce them to their first nothing; but God is an infinite spirit. 3. The angels are confined spirits, they cannot be *duobus locis simul*, they are confined to a place: but God is an immense spirit, and cannot be confined, being in all places at once. 4. The angels, though they

are spirits, yet they are but ministring spirits, Heb. i. 14. Though they are spirits, yet are they servants, God is a super-excellent spirit, the 'Father of spirits,' Heb. xii. 9.

2. The soul is a spirit, Ecclef. xii. 7. 'The spirit shall return unto God that gave it.'

*Q. How doth God, being a spirit, differ from the soul?*

Servetus and Osiander thought, that the soul being infused, did convey into man the very spirit and substance of God; an absurd opinion, for the essence of God is incommunicable.

*Ans.* Therefore, when it is said, the soul is a spirit, it is meant, God hath made it intelligible, and hath stamped upon it his likeness, not his essence.

*Q. But is it not said, That we are made partakers of the divine nature?*

*Ans.* By divine nature, there is meant divine qualities, 2 Pet. i. 4. We are made partakers of the divine nature, not by identity or union with the divine essence, but by a transformation into the divine likeness. Thus you see how God differs from other spirits, angels and souls of men. He is a spirit of transcendent excellency, the 'Father of spirits.'

*Obj. Against this Vorsius and the Anthropomorphites object, that, in scripture, an human shape and figure is given to God; he is said to have eyes and hands?*

*Ans.* It is contrary to the nature of a spirit to have a corporeal substance; Luke xxiv. 39. 'Handle me, and see me; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.' Bodily members are ascribed to God, not properly, but metaphorically, and in a borrowed sense; he is only set out to our capacity: by the right-hand of the Lord is meant his power; by the eyes of the Lord is meant his wisdom. Now that God is a spirit, and is not capable of bodily shape or substance, is clear. 1. A body is visible, but God is invisible; therefore he is a spirit, 1 Tim. vi. 16. whom 'no man hath seen, nor can see,' not by an eye of sense. 2. A body is terminated, can be but in one place at once; but God is every where, in all places at once; therefore he is a spirit, Pl. cxxxix. 7, 8. God's centre is every where, and his circumference is no where. 3. A body being compounded of integral parts may be dissolved; *quicquid divisibile est corruptibile*: but the Godhead is not capable of dissolution; he can have no end, from whom all things have their beginning. So that it clearly appears that God is a spirit, which adds to the perfection of his nature.

*Use 1.* If God be a spirit, then he is impassible; he is not capable of being hurt. Wicked men set up their banners, and bend their forces against God; they are said to fight against God, Acts v. 39. But what will this fighting avail? What hurt can they do to the Deity? God is a spirit, and therefore cannot re-

ceive any hurtful impressiō: wicked men may imagine evil against the Lord; Nahum i. 9. 'What do ye imagine against the Lord?' But God, being a spirit, is impenetrable. The wicked may eclipse his glory, but cannot touch his essence. God can hurt his enemies, but they cannot hurt him. Julian might throw up his dagger into the air against Heaven, but could not touch the Deity. God is a spirit, invisible. How can the wicked with all their forces hurt him, when they cannot see him? Hence all the attempts of the wicked against God are foolish, and prove abortive; Psal. ii. 3, 4. 'The kings of the earth set themselves against the Lord, and against his anointed. He that sits in heaven shall laugh.' He is a spirit, he can wound them, but they cannot touch him.

*Use 2.* If God be a spirit, then it shews the folly of the Pagans, who worship him by pictures and images. Being a spirit, we cannot make any image to represent him by; Deut. iv. 12. 'The Lord spake to you out of the midst of the fire, ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude.'

1. God being a spirit is imperceptible, cannot be discerned; how then can there be any resemblance made of him; Isaiah xl. 18. 'To whom then will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto him?' How can you paint the Deity? Can we make an image of that which we never saw? Ye saw no similitude. God is a spirit. It were a folly to go to make the picture of the soul, because it is a spiritual thing; or to paint the angels, because they are spirits.

*Obj.* Are not the angels in scripture represented by the cherubims?

*Ans.* There is *Imago personæ et officii*; there is the image of the person, and the image that represents the office. The cherubims did not represent the persons of the angels, but their office. The cherubims were made with wings, to shew the swiftness of the angels in discharge of their office: and if we cannot picture the soul, nor the persons of angels, because they are spirits, much less can we make an image or picture of God, who is infinite and the Father of spirits.

2. God, being a spirit, is omnipresent; he is present in all places, Jer. xxiii. 24. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.' Therefore, being every where present, it is absurd to worship him by an image: were it not a foolish thing to bow down to the king's picture, when the king is present? So to go to worship God's image, when God himself is present.

*Q.* But how then shall we conceive of God, being a spirit, if we may make no image or resemblance of him?

*Ans.* We must conceive of him spiritually, viz. (1.) In his attributes: his holiness, justice, goodness, which are the beams by which his divine nature shines forth. (2.) We must con-



ceive of him as he is in Christ ; Christ ‘ is the image of the invisible God :’ Col. i. 15. Set the eyes of your faith on Christ, God-man. In Christ we see some sparklings of the divine glory ; in him there is the exact resemblance of all his Father’s excellencies. The wisdom, love and holiness of God the Father shine forth in Christ ; John xiv. 9. ‘ He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.’

3. *Infer.* If God be a spirit, it shews us, that the more spiritual we grow, the more we grow like to God. How do earth and spirit agree ? Phil. iii. 9. Earthly ones may give for their crest, the mole or tortoise that live in the earth. What resemblance is there between an earthly heart, and him who is a spirit ? The more spiritual any one is, the more like God.

Q. *What is it to be spiritual ?*

*Ans.* To be refined and sublimated, to have the heart still in heaven, to be thinking of God and glory, and to be carried up in a fiery chariot of love to God ; this is to be spiritual : Psal. lxxiii. 25. ‘ Whom have I in heaven but thee ?’ On which Beza paraphraseth thus, *Apage terra, utinam tecum in caelo essem !* ‘ O that I were in heaven with thee !’ a Christian, who is taken off these earthly things, as the spirits are taken off from the lees, hath a noble spiritual soul, and doth most resemble him who is a spirit.

4. *Infer.* It shews us what that worship is God requires of us, and is most acceptable to him, viz. such a worship as is suitable to his nature, ‘ spiritual worship,’ John iv. 24. ‘ They which worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.’ Spiritual worship is the virgin-worship. Though God will have the service of our bodies, our eyes and hands lifted up, to testify to others that reverence we have of God’s glory and majesty, yet chiefly he will have the worship of the soul, 1 Cor. vi. 20. ‘ Glorify God in your body and in our spirit.’ Spirit-worship God prizeth, because it comes so near to his own nature, who is a spirit.

Q. *What is it to worship God in the spirit ?*

*Ans.* 1. To worship him without ceremonies. The ceremonies of the law, which God himself ordained, are now abrogated, and out of date ; Christ the substance being come, the shadows fly away ; and therefore the apostle calls the legal ceremonies carnal rites, Heb. ix. 10. and if we may not use those Jewish ceremonies which God did once appoint, then not those which he did never appoint.

*Ans.* 1. To worship God in spirit, is to worship him, (1.) With faith in the blood of the Messiah, Heb. xi. 9. And (2.) To worship him with the utmost zeal and intenseness of soul, Acts xxvi. 7. ‘ Our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night,’ with intenseness of spirit ; not only constantly, but in-

stantly. This is to worship God in the spirit. The more spiritual any service is, the nearer it comes to God, who is a spirit, and the more excellent it is; the spiritual part of the duty is the fat of the sacrifice, it is the soul and quintessence of religion. The richest cordials are made of spirits, and the best duties are such as are of a spiritual nature. God is a spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit: it is not pomp of worship, but purity, which God accepts. Repentance is not in the outward severities used to the body, penance, fasting, and chastising the body, but it consists in the sacrifice of a broken heart: thanksgiving doth not stand in church-music, the melody of an organ, but rather in making melody in the heart to the Lord, Eph. v. 19. Prayer is not the tuning the voice into a heartless confession, or telling over a few beads, but it consists in sighs and groans, Rom. viii. 26. When the fire of fervency is put to the incense of prayer, then it ascends as a sweet odour; that is the true holy water, not that which the Pope sprinkles, but what is distilled from the limbec of a penitent eye. Spirit-worship best pleaseth that God who is a spirit, John iv. 23. 'The Father seeketh such to worship him;' to shew the great acceptance of such, and how God is delighted with spiritual worship. This is the savoury meat God loves. How few mind this! Worshipping him who is a Spirit, in the spirit; they give him more dregs than spirits; they think it enough to bring their duties, but not their hearts, which hath made God disclaim these very services he himself appointed, Isa. i. 12. Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Let us then give God spirit-worship, this best suits with his nature; a sovereign elixir full of virtue may be given in a few drops; a little prayer, if it be with the heart and spirit, may have much virtue and efficacy in it. The publican made but a short prayer, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' Luke xviii. 13. but it was full of life and spirit; it came from the heart, therefore it was accepted.

*Use 2. Of exhortation.* Pray to God, that as he is a spirit, so he will give us of his spirit. The essence of God is incommunicable; but the motions, the presence and influences of his Spirit. When the sun shines in a room, not the body of the sun is there, but the light, heat, and influence of the sun. God hath made a promise of his Spirit, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. 'I will put my Spirit within you.' Turn promises into prayers. "O Lord, thou who art a spirit, give me of thy spirit; I flesh, beg thy spirit, thy enlightning, sanctifying, quickning spirit." Melancthon's prayer, "Lord, inflame my soul with thy Holy Spirit." How needful is his Spirit? We cannot do any duty without it in a lively manner; when this wind blows upon our sails, then we move swiftly towards heaven. Pray therefore,

that God would give us of the residue of his Spirit, Mal. ii. 15. that we may move more vigorously in the sphere of religion.

*Use 3. Of comfort.* As God is a spirit, so the reward that he gives is spiritual; that is the excellency of it. As the chief blessings he gives us in this life are spiritual blessings, Eph. i. 3. not gold and silver; he gives Christ his love; he fills us with grace: so the main rewards he gives us after this life are spiritual, 'a crown of glory that fadeth not away,' 1 Pet. v. 4. Earthly crowns fade, but the believer's crown, being spiritual, is immortal, a never-fading crown. "It is impossible (saith Julius Scaliger) for that which is spiritual to be subject to change or corruption." This may comfort a Christian in all his labours and sufferings; he lays out himself for God, and hath little or no reward here; but remember, God, who is a spirit, will give spiritual rewards, a sight of his face in heaven, white robes, a weight of glory. Be not then weary of God's service; think of the spiritual reward, a crown of glory which fadeth not away.



## GOD IS INFINITE.

*Q. WHAT kind of spirit is God?*

*Ans.* He is infinite; so he differs from all created beings which are finite. Tho' infinite may be applied to all God's attributes, he is infinitely merciful, infinitely wise, infinitely holy; yet, if we take infiniteness properly so, it implies,

1. God's omnipresence; the Greek word for infinite, signifies 'without bounds or limits:' God is not confined to any place, he is infinite, and so is present in all places at once. His centre is every where, *Divina essentia nusquam inclusa aut exclusa*, Aug. 1 Kings viii. 27. 'Behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.' This the Turks have a notion of, they build their temples open on the top, to shew that God cannot be confined to their temples, or circumscribed, but is in all places by his presence. God's essence is not limited either to the regions above, or to the terrestrial globe, but his whole essence is every where; this is to be infinite. As philosophers say of the soul, it is, *Tota in tota, et tota in quolibet parte*: the soul is in every part of the body, in the eye, heart, foot: so we may say of God, he is *ubique*, his essence is every where, his circuit is in heaven and in earth, and sea, and he is in all places of his circuit at once: 'This is to be infinite.' God, who bounds every thing else, is himself without bounds; he set bounds to the sea, *Huc usque*, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further.' He sets bounds to the angels; they, like the



chêrubims, move and stand at his appointment, Ezek. x. 16. but he is infinite, without bounds. He who can span the heavens, and weigh the earth in a pair of scales, must needs be infinite, Isa. xl. 22.

Obj. *Vorstius*, That God is in all places at once, but not in regard of his essence, but, *Virtute et potentia*, by his virtue and influence; as the body of the sun is in heaven, it only sends forth its beams and influences to the earth; or as a king, who is in all places of his kingdom authoritative, by his power and authority, but he is personally in his throne.

Ans. But to answer; God, who is infinite, is in all places at once, not only by his influence, but by his essence; for, if his essence fills all places, then he must needs be there in person. But, Ergo, minor in, Jer. xxiii. 24. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth.'

Object. But doth not God say, heaven is his throne? Isaiah lxvi. 1.

Ans. It is also said, that an humble heart is his throne, Isa. lvii. 15. The humble heart is his throne, in regard of his gracious presence; and yet neither of these thrones will hold him, for the heaven of heavens cannot contain him.

Object. But if God be infinite in all places, then he is in places impure, and mingles with that impurity?

Ans. Though God be in all places, in the heart of a sinner by his inspection, and in hell by his justice, yet he doth not mingle with that impurity, or receive the least tincture of evil. *Divina natura non est immista rebus aut sordibus inquinata*, Aug. No more than the sun shining on a dunghill is defiled, or its beauty spotted, or than Christ going among sinners was defiled, his Godhead was a sufficient antidote against infection.

Reason why God must needs be infinite in all places at once, not only in regard of the simplicity and purity of his nature, but in regard of his power, which being so glorious who can set him bounds, or prescribe him a circuit to walk in? It is as if the drop should go to limit the ocean, or the star to set the sun its bounds.

Use 1. It condemns the Papists, who would make more things infinite than the Godhead: They hold that Christ's body is in many places at once, that it is in heaven, and in the bread and wine in the sacrament. Though Christ as he is God is infinite, and in all places at once, yet as man he is not: Christ, when he was on earth, his manhood was not in heaven, though his Godhead was; and now he is in heaven, his manhood is not on earth, though his Godhead be; Heb. x. 5. it is spoken of Christ, 'A body thou hast prepared me.' This body cannot be in all places at once; for then it is no more a body, but a spirit; Christ's body in heaven, though it be glorified, it is not deified;

it is not infinite, for so it must be, if it be both in heaven, and in the bread and wine by transubstantiation.

If God be infinite, present in all places at once, then it is certain he governs all things in his own person; he needs no proxies or deputies to help him to carry on his government. He is in all places at an instant, and manageth all affairs both in the earth and heaven. A king cannot be in all places of his kingdom in his own person, therefore he is fain to govern by deputies and vicegerents, and they often pervert justice; but God, being infinite, needs no deputies, he is present in all places, he sees all with his own eyes, and hears all with his own ears; he is every where in his own person, therefore is fit to be the judge of the world, he will do every one right.

If God be infinite by his omnipresence, then see the greatness and immenseness of the divine Majesty! What a great God do we serve? 1 Chron. xxix. 11. 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the glory, and the majesty, and thou art exalted as head above all.' Well may the scripture display the greatness of his glory, who is infinite in all places. He transcends our weak conceptions; how can our finite understanding comprehend him who is infinite? He is infinitely above all our praises, Neh. ix. 5. 'Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.' O what a poor nothing is man, when we think of God's infiniteness! As the stars disappear at the rising of the sun, O how doth man shrink into nothing, when infinite Majesty shines forth in his glory! Isa. xl. 15. 'The nations are as a drop of the bucket, or the small dust of the balance!' O what a little of that drop are we! The heathens thought they had sufficiently praised Jupiter, when they called him Great Jupiter. Of what immense majesty is God, who fills all places at once! His excellent greatness, Psal. cl. 2. If God be infinite, filling heaven and earth, see what a full portion the saints have; they have him for their portion, who is infinite. His fulness is an infinite fulness; and he is infinitely sweet, as well as infinitely full: if a conduit be filled with wine, here is a sweet fulness, but still it is finite; but God is a sweet fulness, and it is an infinite. He is infinitely full of beauty, of love; his riches are called unsearchable, Eph. iii. 8. because they are infinite. Stretch your thoughts as much as you can, there is that in God exceeds; it is an infinite fulness. He is said to do abundantly for us, above all that we can ask, Eph. iii. 20. What can an ambitious spirit ask? He can ask crowns and kingdoms, millions of worlds; but God can give more than we can ask, because he is infinite, nay, or think: we can think, what if all the dust were turned to silver, if every flower were a ruby, every sand in the sea a diamond: yet God can give more than we can think, because he is infinite! O how rich are they who

have the infinite God for their portion! Well might David say, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage,' Psal. xvi. 5, 6. We may go with the bee from flower to flower, but we shall never have full satisfaction till we come to the infinite God. Jacob said, 'I have enough;' in the Hebrew, "I have all," Gen. xxxiii. 11. because he had the infinite God for his portion. God being an infinite fulness, there is no fear of want for any of the heirs of heaven; though there be millions of saints and angels, which have a share in God's riches, yet he hath enough for them all, because he is infinite. Though a thousand men behold the sun, there is light enough in the sun for them all; put never so many buckets into the sea, there is water enough in the sea to fill them. Though an innumerable company of saints and angels are to be filled out of God's fulness, yet God, being infinite, he hath abundantly enough to satisfy them. God hath land enough to give to all his heirs, there can be no want in that which is infinite.

If God be infinite, he fills all places, is every where present; this is sad to the wicked, God is their enemy, and they cannot escape him, nor flee from him, for he is every where present: they are never out of his eye, nor out of his reach, Psal. xxi. 8. 'Thy hand shall find out all thy enemies.' What caves or thickets can men hide in, that God cannot find them: go where they will, he is present, Psal. cxxxix. 7. 'Whither shall I flee from thy presence?' If a man owes a debt to another, he may make some escape, and flee into another land, where the creditor cannot find him. 'But whither shall I flee from thy presence?' God is infinite, he is in all places; so that he will find out his enemies and punish them.

*Object.* But is it not said, *Cain went out from the presence of the Lord?* Gen. iv. 16.

*Ans.* The meaning is, he went out from the church of God, where were the visible signs of God's presence, and where God did in a special manner, manifest his sweet presence to his people: but Cain could not go out of God's sight; for God being infinite, is every where present. Sinners can neither go from an accusing conscience, nor a revenging God.

If God be every where present, then for a Christian to walk with God is not impossible. God is not only in heaven, but he is in earth too, Isa. lvi. 1. Heaven is his throne, there he sits; the earth is his footstool, there he stands. He is every where present, therefore we may come to walk with God: 'Enoch walked with God,' Gen. v. 21. If God was confined to heaven, a trembling soul might think, How can I converse with God, how can I walk with him who lives in *excelsis*, above the upper region? but God is not confined to heaven, he is omni-



present; he is above us, yet he is about us, he is near to us, Acts xvii. 27. 'Though he be not far from the assembly of the saints. He stands in the congregation of the mighty,' Psal. lxxii. 1. He is present with us, God is in every one of us; so that here on earth we may walk with God. In heaven the saints rest with him, on earth they walk with him. To walk with God, is to walk by faith; we are said to draw nigh to God, Heb. x. 22. and to see him, Heb. xi. 27. 'As seeing him who is invisible;' and to have fellowship with him, Hos. i. 3. 'Our fellowship is with the Father.' Thus we may take a turn with him every day by faith: (It is a slighting of God not to walk with him: if a king be in presence, it is a slighting him, to neglect him, and walk with the page) there is no walk in the world so sweet as to walk with God: Psalm lxxxix. 15. 'They shall walk in the light of thy countenance,' Psal. cxxxviii. 5. 'Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord;' it is like walking among beds of spices, which send forth a fragrant perfume.

*Use 2.* If God be infinite in his glorious essence, learn to admire, where you cannot fathom. The angels wear a vail, they cover their faces, as adoring this infinite majesty, Isa. vi. 3. Elias wrapped himself in a mantle when God's glory passed by. Admire where you cannot fathom, Job xi. 7. 'Canst thou by searching find out God? Here we see some beams of his glory, we see him in the glass of the creation; we see him in his picture, his image shines in the saints; who can but search out all his essential glory? What angel can measure these pyramids? 'Canst thou by searching find out God?' he is infinite. We can no more search out his infinite perfections, than a man upon the top of the highest mountain can reach the firmament, or take a star in his hand. O have God-adoring thoughts! Adore where you cannot fathom: there are many mysteries in nature which we cannot fathom; why the sea should be higher than the earth, yet not drown it; why Nilus should overflow in summer, when, by the course of nature, the waters are lowest; how the bones grow in the womb; Eccl. xi. 5. If these things oppose us, how may the infinite mystery of the Deity transcend our most raised intellects: Ask the geometrician, if he can, with a pair of compasses, measure the breadth of the earth. So unable are we to measure the infinite perfections of God. In heaven we shall see God clearly, but not fully, for he is infinite: he will communicate himself to us, according to the bigness of our vessel, but not the immenseness of his nature. Adore then where you cannot fathom.

If God be infinite in all places, then let us not go to limit God, Psal. lxxxviii. 41. 'They limited the holy One of Israel.' It is a limiting God to confine him within the narrow compass

of our reason. Reason thinks God must go such a way to work, or the business will never be effected. This is to limit God to our reason : whereas he is infinite, and his ways are past finding out, Rom. xi. 33. In the deliverance of the church, it is a limiting God, either to set him a time, or prescribe him a method for deliverance. God will deliver Zion, but he will be left to his own liberty ; he will not be tied to a place, to a time, to an instrument : this were to limit him, and then he should not be infinite. God will go his own way, he will pose and nonplus reason, he will work by improbabilities, he will save in such a way, as we think he will destroy ; now he acts like himself, like an infinite wonder-working God.



### OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

‘ For the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed,’ 1 Sam. ii. 3. Glorious things are spoken of God ; he transcends our thoughts, and the angels praise. God’s glory lies chiefly in his attributes, which are the several beams by which the divine nature shines forth. Among other of his orient excellencies, this is not the least, The Lord is a God of knowledge ; or as the Hebrew word is, ‘ A God of knowledges.’ Through the bright mirror of his own essence, he hath a full idea and cognisance of all things ; the world is to him a transparent body. He makes an heart-anatomy ; Rev. ii. 25. ‘ I am he which searcheth the reins and the heart.’ The clouds are no canopy, the night is no curtain to draw between us and his sight, Psal. cxxxix. 12. ‘ The darkness hideth not from thee.’ There is not a word we whisper, but God hears it, Psal. cxxxix. 4. ‘ There is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.’ There is not the most subtil thought comes into our mind, but God perceives it, Isa. lxxv. 8. ‘ I know their thoughts.’ Thoughts speak as loud in God’s ears, as words do in ours. All our actions, though never so subtilly contrived, and secretly conveyed, are visible to the eye of omniscience, Isa. lxxvi. 18. ‘ I know their works.’ Achan hid the Babylonish garment in the earth, but God brought it to light, Joh. vii. 21. Minerva was drawn in such curious colours, and so lively penciled, that which way soever one turned, Minerva’s eyes were upon him ; so, which way soever we turn ourselves, still God’s eye is upon us, Job xxvii. 16. ‘ Dost thou know the balancing of the clouds ; the wondrous works of him that is perfect in knowledge ?’ God knows whatever is knowable ; he knows future contingencies. He foretold Israel’s coming out of Babylon, and the virgin’s conceiving. By this

the Lord proves the truth of his Godhead against idol-gods, Isa. xli. 23. 'Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know ye are gods.' The perfection of God's knowledge is primary. He is the original, the pattern and prototype of all knowledge; others borrow their knowledge of him; the angels light their lamps at this glorious sun. (2.) God's knowledge is pure. It is not contaminated with the object. *Divinia natura non est immista rebus aut sordibus inquinata*, August. Though God knows sin, yet it is to hate and punish it. No evil can mix or incorporate with his knowledge, no more than the sun can be defiled with the vapours which arise from the earth. (3.) God's knowledge is facile; it is without any difficulty. We study and search for knowledge, Prov. ii. 4. 'If thou seekest for her as for silver.' But the lamp of God's knowledge is so infinitely bright, that all things are intelligible to him.

(4.) God's knowledge is infallible; there is no mistake in his knowledge. Human knowledge is subject to error and misprision. A physician may mistake the cause of a disease: but God's knowledge is unerring; he can neither deceive, nor be deceived; he cannot deceive, because he is truth; nor be deceived, because he is wisdom. (5.) God's knowledge is instantaneous. Our knowledge is successive, one thing after another. We argue from the effect to the cause. God knows things past, present, and to come, *una intuitu*, at once, they are all before him in one entire prospect.

(1.) God's knowledge is retentive; he never loseth any of his knowledge; he hath *reminiscentia*, as well as *intelligentia*; he remembers as well as understands. Many things elapse out of our mind, but God's knowledge is eternized. Things transacted a thousand years ago, are as fresh to him, as they were done but the last minute. Thus he is perfect in knowledge.

Object. *But is it not said*, Gen. xviii. 21. *I will go down and see whether they have done according to the cry which is come up unto me, and I will know?*

Ans. It could not be a necessity, or that God was ignorant; because there is mention made of a cry; but the Lord speaks there after the manner of a judge, who will first examine the cause before he passeth the sentence. God, when he is upon a work of justice, is not in a riot, as if he did not care where he hits; but he goes in a way of circuit against offenders. 'He lays judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, Isa. xxviii. 17.

Object. Hos. xiii. 13. *The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up, their sin is hid?*

Ans. Not that his sin was hid from God, but his sin is hid; that is, it is recorded, it is laid up against a day of reckoning.



That this is the meaning, is clear by the foregoing words, his iniquity is bound up: as the clerk of the assizes binds up the indictments of malefactors in a bundle, and, at the assizes, brings out the indictments, and reads them in court; so God bind's up men's sins in a bundle, and, at the day of judgment, this bundle shall be opened, and all their sins brought to light before men and angels.

That God is thus infinite in his knowledge: 1. It cannot but be so; for he, who is the original cause, and gives a being to things, must needs have a clear inspection into them, Psal. xciv. 9. 'He that planteth the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?' He who makes a watch or engine, knows all the workmanship in it. God, that made the heart, knows all the motions and fallacies of it: He is like Ezekiel's wheels, full of eyes, and, as Austin saith, *Totus oculus*, "All eye." 2. It ought to be so: for he is to be 'Judge of all the world,' Gen. xviii. 25. There are so many causes to be brought before him, and so many persons to be tried, that he must have a most exquisite perfect knowledge, or he could not do justice. An ordinary judge cannot proceed without a jury, the jury must search the cause, and give in their verdict; but God can judge without a jury. He knows all things in and of himself, and needs no witnesses to inform him. A judge judgeth only matters of fact, but God judgeth the heart. He not only judgeth wicked actions, but wicked designs. He sees the treason of the heart, and punisheth it.

*Use 1.* Is God infinite in knowledge, 1 John i. 5. 'He is light, and in him is no darkness;' then how unlike are they to God, who are darkness, and in them is no light, who are destitute of knowledge, such as the Indians who never heard of God? And are there not many among us, who are no better than baptized heathens? who are to seek in the first principles of the oracles of God. It is sad, that after the sun of the gospel hath shined so long in our horizon, yet to this day the veil should be upon their heart. Such as are enveloped with ignorance, cannot give God a reasonable service, Rom. xii. i. "Ignorance is the nurse of impiety:" The schoolmen say, *Omne peccatum fundatur in ignorantia*. Jer. ix. 3. 'They proceed from evil to evil, and know not me, saith the Lord.' Where ignorance reigns in the understanding, lust rageth in the affections; Prov. xix. 2. 'That the mind be without knowledge, it is not good; neither faith nor fear: no faith; for knowledge carries the torch before faith. Psal. ix. 10. 'They that know thy name shall put their trust in thee.' A man can no more believe without knowledge, than the eye can see without light. Nor fear of God; how can they fear him whom they do not know! The covering of Haman's face was a sad preface of

death. When people's minds are covered with ignorance, this covering of the face is a fatal forerunner of destruction.

2. If God be a God of knowledge, then see the folly of hypocrisy. Hypocrites do not *virtutem facere*, but  *fingere*. Melanct. They carry it fair with men, but care not how bad their hearts are; they live in secret sin, Pf. lxxiii. 11. 'They say how doth God know?' Pf. x. 11. 'God hath forgotten, he hideth his face, he will never see it.' But, Pf. cxlvii. 5. 'His understanding is infinite:' He hath a grate [*crates*] that looks into men's breasts, he hath a key for the heart, he beholds all the sinful workings of men's spirits; as in a glass-hive we can see the bees working in their combs, Mat. vi. 4. 'He sees in secret; *in impios habet*, Rivet. As a merchant enters down debts in his book, so God hath his diary or day-book, and he enters down every sin into the book: he makes a critical defendant upon men's actions. Jeroboam's wife disguised herself that the prophet should not know her; but he discerned her, 1 Kings xiv. 6. 'Why feignest thou thyself to be another?' The hypocrite thinks to prevaricate and juggle with God, but God will unmask him, Eccl. xii. 14. 'God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing,' Jer. xxix. 32. 'They have committed villany in Israel, even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord.' Ay, but the hypocrite hopes he shall colour over his sin, and make it look very specious. Absalom masks over his treason with the pretence of a religious vow. Judas dissembles his envy at Christ, and covetousness, with the pretence of 'charity to the poor,' John xii. 5. Jehu makes religion a stirrup to his ambitious design, 1 Kings x. 16. But God sees through these fig-leaves. You may see a jade under his gilt trappings, Jer. xvi. 17. 'Their iniquities are not hid from mine eyes.' And he that hath an eye to see will find an hand to punish.

*Use 2. Of exhortation.* Is God so infinite in his knowledge? Then we should always set ourselves as under his omniscient eye. *Sic vivendum est tanquam in conspectu*, Seneca. Let us set David's prospect before our eye, Psal. xvi. 8. 'I have set the Lord always before me.' Seneca counselled Lucilius, that whatever he was doing, he should imagine some of the Roman worthies before him, and then he would do nothing dishonourable. The consideration of God's omniscieny would, 1. Be preventive of much sin. The eye of man will restrain from sin; and will not God's eyes much more? Esth. vii. 8. 'Will he force the queen before me, when I stand and look on?' Will we sin when our judge looks on? Would men speak so vainly, if they considered God over-heard them? Latimer took heed to every word in his examination, when he heard the pen go behind the hangings: so, what care would persons have of their



words, if they remembered God heard, and the pen is going in heaven? Would men go after strange flesh, if they believed God was a spectator of their wickedness, and would make them do penance in hell for it? Would they defraud in their dealings, and use false weights, if they thought God saw them, and for making their weights lighter would make their damnation heavier? 2. The setting ourselves as under the eye of God's omniscience, would cause reverence in the worship of God. God sees the frame and carriage of our hearts when we come before him! how would this call in our straggling thoughts? How would this animate and spirit duty? It would make us put fire to the incense, Acts xxvi. 7. 'The tribes instantly served God day and night,' *omnibus venibus*, with the utmost zeal and intenseness of spirit. To think God is in this place, he beholds us, would add wings to prayer, and oil to the flame of our devotion.

2. Is God's knowledge infinite? Study sincerity, be what you seem, 1 Sam. xvi. 7. 'The Lord looketh upon the heart,' Men judge of the heart by the actions, God judgeth of the actions by the heart; if the heart be sincere, God will see the faith and wink at the failing. Aha had his blemishes, but his heart was right with God, 2 Chron. xv. 17. God saw his sincerity, and pardoned his infirmity. Sincerity in a Christian, is like chastity in a wife, which doth excuse many failings. Sincerity makes our duties acceptable, like musk among linen, that perfumes it. As Jehu said to Jehonadab, 2 Kings x. 13. 'Is thy heart right with me? And he said, It is. If it be, said, he, give me thy hand; and he took him up into the chariot:' so, if God see our heart is right, that we love him, and design his glory, now saith he, give me your prayers and tears; now you shall come up with me into the triumphant chariot of glory. Sincerity makes our services to be golden, and God will not cast away this gold though it may want some weight. Is God omniscient, and his eye chiefly upon the heart? Wear this girdle of truth about you, and never leave it off.

Use 3. *Of comfort.* Is God a God of infinite knowledge? Then there is comfort, 1. To the faints in particular, 2. To the church in general, in three respects.

1. In case of private devotion, Christian, thou settest hours apart for God, thy thoughts run upon him as thy treasure: God takes notice of every good thought, Mal. iii. 17. He had a book of remembrance written for them that thought upon his name. Thou enterest into thy closet, and prayest to thy Father in secret; he hears every sigh and groan, Psal. xxxviii. 9. 'My groaning is not hid from thee.' Thou waterest the seed of thy prayer with tears, God bottles every tear, Psal. lvi. 8. 'Put thou my tears into thy bottle.' When the secrets of



all hearts shall be opened, God will make an honourable mention of the zeal and devotion of his people, and he himself will be the herald of their praises, 1 Cor. iv. 5. 'Then shall every man have praise of God.'

2. The infiniteness of God's knowledge is a comfort, in case the saints have not so clear a knowledge of themselves. They find so much corruption, that they judge they have no grace, Gen. xxv. 22. 'If it be so why am I thus? If I have grace, why is my heart so dead and earthly a frame! O remember, God is of infinite knowledge, he can spy grace where thou canst not; he can see grace hid under corruption, as the stars may be hid under a cloud. God can see that holiness in thee which thou canst not discern in thyself; he can spy the flower of grace in thee, though overtopped with weeds, 1 Kings xiv. 13. 'Because there is in him some good thing.' God sees some good thing in his people, when they can see no good in themselves; and though they judge themselves, he will give them an absolution.

3. It is comfort in respect of personal injuries. It is the saints' lot to suffer; the head being crowned with thorns, the feet must not tread upon roses. If saints find a real purgatory, it is in this life; but this is the comfort, God sees what wrong is done to them; the apple of his eye is touched, and is not he sensible; St. Paul was scourged by cruel hands, 1 Cor. xi. 35. 'Thrice was I beaten with rods;' as if you should see a scullion whip the king's son. God beholds it, Exod. iii. 7. 'I know their sorrows.' The wicked make wounds in the backs of the saints, and then pour in vinegar; God writes down their cruelty. Believers are part of Christ's mystical body; and for every drop of a saint's blood spilt, God puts a drop of wrath in his vial.

4. Comfort to the church of God in general. If God be a God of knowledge, he sees all the plots of the enemies against Zion, and can make them prove abortive. The wicked are subtle, having borrowed their skill of the old serpent; they dig deep, to hide their counsels from God, but he sees them, and can easily counter-work them. The dragon is described with seven heads, Rev. xii. 3. to shew how he plots against the church: but God is described with seven eyes, Zech. iii. 9. to shew, that he sees all the plots and stratagems of the enemies; and when they deal proudly, he can be above them. Come, saith Pharaoh, 'let us deal wisely,' Ex. i. 10. and he never played the fool more than when he thought to deal wisely, Ex. xiv. 23. 'In the morning-watch the Lord looked to the host of the Egyptians, by the pillar of fire, and troubled the host.' How may this be as sap in the vine, and may comfort the church of God in her militant state. The Lord hath an eye in

all the councils and combinations of the enemy ; he sees them in their train, and can blow them up in their own mine.

## OF THE ETERNITY OF GOD.

THE next attribute is, ' God is eternal,' Pf. cx. 2. ' From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.' The schoolmen distinguish between *avum et eternum*, to explain the notion of eternity. There is a three-fold being : 1st, Such a being as had a beginning, and shall have an end ; so all sensitive creatures, the beasts, fowls, fishes ; these at death are destroyed, and return to dust ; their being ends with their life. 2d, Such a being as had a beginning, but shall have no end, as the angels and souls of men ; they are eternal *a parte post* ; they abide for ever. 3d, Such a being as is without beginning, and without ending, and that is proper only to God. He is *semper existens*, viz. from everlasting to everlasting : it is God's title, a jewel of his crown : (1.) He is called ' the King eternal,' 1 Tim. i. 17. (2.) Jehovah, a word that properly sets out God's eternity ; a word so dreadful, that the Jews trembled to name or read it ; therefore used another word, Adonai, Lord. Jehovah contains in it time past, present, and to come, Rev. i. 14. ' Which is, and which was, and which is to come ;' it interprets the word Jehovah. (*Which is*) He subsists of himself, having a pure and independant being. (*Which was*) God only was before time. There is no searching into the records of eternity. (*Which is to come*) His kingdom hath no end : his crown hath no successors, Heb. i. 8. ' Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.' The doubling of the word ratifies the certainty of it, as the doubling of Pharaoh's dream did. I shall prove that God only could be eternal, without beginning. Angels could not ; they are but creatures, though spirits ; they were made ; and therefore their beginning may be known ; their antiquity may be searched into ; if you ask when they were created ? Some think before the world was ; but not so : for what was before time was eternal : the angels' first rise and original reacheth no higher than the beginning of the world. It is thought by the learned, that the angels were made that day on which the heavens were made, Job xxxviii. 7. ' When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.' St. Hierom, Gregory, and venerable Bede, understands it of the angels, when God laid the foundation-stone of the world, the angels being then created, did sing the anthems of joy and praise ; the angels could not be before time ; for what was before time was eternal. It is only proper to God to be eternal, without begin-

ning: He is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, Rev. i. 8. No creature can write itself Alpha, that is only a flower of the crown of heaven, Exod. iii. 14. 'I am that I am,' viz. He who exists from and to eternity.

*Use 1.* Here is thunder and lightning to the wicked; God is eternal, therefore the torments of the wicked are eternal. God lives for ever; and as long as God lives he will be punishing the damned.—This, methinks, should be as the hand-writing upon the wall, Dan. v. 5. it should 'make their joints to be loosed,' &c. The sinner takes liberty to sin; he breaks God's laws, like a wild beast that breaks over the hedge, and leaps into forbidden pasture; he sins with greediness, Eph. iv. 19. as if he thought he could not sin fast enough. But remember, this is one of God's names, Eternal; and as long as God is eternal, he hath time enough to reckon with all his enemies. To make sinners tremble, let them think of these three things; the torments of the damned are without intermission, without mixture, and eternal.

1. Without *intermission*. Their pains shall be acute and sharp, and no relaxation; the fire shall not be slackened or abated, Rev. xiv. 11. 'They have no rest day nor night;' like one that hath his joints stretched continually on the rack, and hath no ease: therefore the wrath of God is compared to a stream of brimstone, Isa. xxx. 33. Why to a stream? Because a stream runs without intermission; it runs, and doth not stop; so God's wrath runs like a stream, and pours out without any intermission. In the pains of this life, there is some abatement and intermission; the fever abates, after a fit of the stone, the patient hath some ease: but the pains of hell are intense and violent, *in summo gradu*; the damned soul never saith, I am now more at ease.

2. Without *mixture*. Hell is a place of pure justice. In this life, God in anger remembers mercy, he mixeth compassion with suffering, Deut. xxxiii. 25. Acher's shoe was of iron, but his foot was dipt in oil. Affliction is the iron-shoe, but mercy is mixed with it; here is the foot dipt in oil. But the torments of the damned have no mixture, Rev. xiv. 10. 'They shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture.' No mixture of mercy. How is the cup of wrath said to be full of mixture, Psal. lxxxv. 8. 'They shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture.' No mixture of mercy. How is the cup of wrath said to be full of mixture, Psal. lxxxv. 8. 'The wine is red, it is full of mixture;' yet in the Revelation it is said to be without mixture? It is full of mixture, that is, it is full of all the ingredients that may make it bitter; the worm, the fire, the curse of God, all these are bitter ingredients. It is a cup



mixed, yet it is without mixture, viz. there shall be nothing to afford the least comfort, no mixture of mercy; so it is a cup without mixture. In the sacrifice of jealousy, Numb. v. 15. there was no oil put to it; so, in the torments of the damned, there is no oil of mercy to abate their sufferings.

3. Without *cessation, eternal*. The pleasure of sin are but for a season, but the torments of the wicked are for ever. Sinners have a short feast, but a long reckoning. Origen erroneously thought, that after a thousand years the damned should be released out of their misery: but the worm, the fire, the prison are all eternal, Rev. xiv. 11. ‘The smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever.’ *Pœnæ gehennales puniunt, non finiunt*. Prosper. Eternity is a sea without bottom and banks. After millions of years, there is not one minute in eternity wasted; and the damned must be ever burning, but never consuming, always dying, but never dead, Rev. ix. 6 ‘They shall seek death, but shall not find it.’ The fire of hell is such, as multitudes of tears will not quench it, length of time will not finish it; the vial of God’s wrath will be always dropping upon a sinner. As long as God is eternal, he lives for ever to be avenged upon the wicked. O eternity! eternity! who can fathom it? Mariners have their plummets to measure the depths of the sea; but what line or plummet shall we use to fathom the depth of eternity? The breath of the Lord kindles the infernal lake, Isa. xxx. 33. and where shall we have engines or buckets to quench that fire; O eternity! if all the body of the earth and sea were turned to sand, and all the air up to the starry heaven were nothing but sand, and a little bird should come every thousand year, and fetch away in her bill, but the tenth part of a grain of all that heap of sand, what a numberless number of years would be spent before that vast heap of sand would be fetcht away? Yet if at the end of all that time, the sinner might come out of hell (tho’ long) yet there would be some hope: but this word Ever, breaks the heart, ‘The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever,’ What a terror is this to the wicked, enough to put them into a cold sweat, to think, as long as God is eternal, he lives for ever to be avenged upon sinners.

Q. Here a question may be moved, *Why sin that is committed in a short time, should be punished eternally?*

Ans. We must hold with St. Augustine, “that God’s judgments on the wicked, *ocult esse possunt, injusta esse non possunt*, may be secret, but never unjust.” The reason why sin committed in a short time is eternally punished, is because every sin is committed against an infinite essence, and no less than eternity of punishment can satisfy. Why is treason punished with confiscation and death, but because it is against the king’s

person, which is sacred? much more that offence which is against God's crown and dignity, is of an heinous and infinite nature, and cannot be satisfied with less than eternal punishment.

*Use 2.* Of comfort to the godly: God is eternal therefore lives for ever to reward the godly, Rom. ii. 7. 'To them who seek for glory and honour, eternal life.' The people of God here are in a suffering condition, Acts xx. 23. 'Bonds and afflictions abide me.' The head being crowned with thorns, the feet must not tread upon roses. The wicked are clad in purple, and fare deliciously, while the godly suffer. Goats climb upon high mountains, while Christ's sheep are in the valley of slaughter. But here is the comfort, God is eternal, and he hath appointed eternal recompences for the saints: in heaven are fresh delights, sweetness without surfeit; and that which is the crown and zenith of heaven's happiness, is, it is eternal, 1 John ii. 15. Were there but the least suspicion that this glory must cease, it would much eclipse, yea imbitter it: but it is eternal. What angel can span eternity? 2 Cor. iv. 17. 'An eternal weight of glory.' The saints shall bathe themselves in the rivers of divine pleasure: and these rivers can never be dried up, Psal. xvi. 11. 'At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.' This is the Elah, the highest strain in the apostle's rhetoric, 1 Thess. iv. 17. 'Ever with the Lord.' There is peace without trouble, ease without pain, glory without end, 'Ever with the Lord.' Let this comfort the saints in all their troubles; their sufferings are but short, but their reward is eternal, Eternity makes heaven to be heaven; 'tis the diamond in the ring: O blessed day, that shall have no night! the sun light of glory shall rise upon the soul, and never set! O blessed spring, that shall have no autumn, or fall of the leaf! the Roman Emperors have three crowns set upon their heads, the first of iron, the second of silver, the third of gold: so the Lord sets three crowns on his children, grace, comfort and glory; and this crown is eternal, 1 Peter v. 4. 'Ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.' The wicked have a never-dying worm, and the godly a never-fading crown. O how should this be a spur to virtue! How willing should we be to work for God? Though we had nothing here, God hath time enough to reward his people; the crown of eternity shall be set upon their head.

*Use 3.* Of exhortation. 1. In general, study eternity. Our thoughts should chiefly run upon eternity. We are all for the present, something that may delight the senses. If we could have lived (as Augustine saith) *a cunabulis mundi*, from the infancy of the world to the world's old age, what were this? What is time, measured with eternity? As the earth is but a small point to the heaven, so time is but, nay scarce a minute to eternity! And, then, what is this poor life which crumbles

away so fast? O think of eternity! *Annos æternos in mente habe*: Brethren, we are every day travelling to eternity: and whether we wake or sleep, we are going our journey; some of us are upon the borders of eternity. O study the shortness of life and length of eternity.

2. More particularly; think of God's eternity, and the soul's eternity. 1. Think of God's eternity. He is the Ancient of days, who was before all time. There is a figurative description of God, Dan. vii. 9. 'The Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool.' His white garment, wherewith he was clothed, signified his majesty; his hair, like the pure wool, his holiness; and the Ancient of days, his eternity. The thoughts of God's eternity would make us have high adoring thoughts of God. We are apt to have mean, irreverent thoughts of him, Psal. l. 21. 'Thou thoughtest I was such an one as thyself;' weak and mortal, but if we would think of God's eternity, when all power ceaseth, he is King eternal, his crown flourisheth for ever, who can make us happy or miserable for ever, this would make us have adoring thoughts of God; Rev. iv. 10. 'The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat upon the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever; and cast their crowns before the throne.' The saints fall down, to signify by that humble posture, that they are not worthy to sit in God's presence. They fall down and they worship him that liveth for ever and ever; they do as it were kiss his feet, and they cast their crowns before the throne, they lay all their honour at his feet: thus they shew humble adoration to the eternal essence. Study God's eternity, it will make us adore where we cannot fathom. 2. Think of the soul's eternity. As God is eternal, so he hath made us eternal. We are never-dying creatures; we are shortly entering upon an eternal state, either of happiness or misery. Have serious thoughts of this: say, O my soul, which of these two eternities, is like to be thy portion? I must shortly depart hence, and whether then shall I go, to which of these eternities, either of glory or misery? The serious meditation of the eternal state we are to pass into, should work strongly with us.

1. Thoughts of eternal torments are a good antidote against sin, sin tempts with its pleasure; but, when we think of eternity, it may cool the intemperate heat of lust. Shall I, for the pleasure of sin for a season, endure eternal pain? Sin, like those locusts, Rev. ix. 7. seems to have on its head a crown like gold, but it hath in it a tail like a scorpion, ver. 10. and a sting in its tail, and this sting can never be plucked out. Shall I venture eternal wrath? Is sin committed so sweet, as lying in hell for



ever is bitter? This would make us flee from sin, as Moses from the serpent.

2. The serious thoughts of eternal happiness would very much take us off from these worldly things; we should not esteem much of them: what are these sublunary things to eternity? they are quickly gone, they salute us, and take their farewell. But I am to enter upon an everlasting estate; I hope to live with him who is eternal: what is the world to me? They who stand upon the top of the Alps, the great cities of Campania seem as small things in their eyes; so he who hath his thoughts fixed on his eternal state after this life, all these things seem as nothing in his eye. What is the glory of this world? how poor and contemptible, compared with an eternal weight of glory?

3. To conclude; The serious thoughts of an eternal state, either of happiness or misery, should have a powerful influence upon whatsoever we take in hand: every work we do, promotes either a blessed or cursed eternity; every good action sets us a step nearer to an eternity of happiness; every bad action sets us a step nearer to an eternity of misery. O what influence would the thoughts of eternity have upon our religious duties? It would make us do them with all our might: a duty well performed, lifts a Christian higher towards heaven, and sets a Christian a step nearer to a blessed eternity.



## GOD'S UNCHANGEABLENESS.

THE next attribute is God's unchangeableness, Mal. iii.

6. 'I am Jehovah, I change not.' 1. God is unchangeable in his nature. 2. In his decree.

1st, Unchangeable in his nature: 1. There is no eclipse of his brightness. 2. No period put to his being.

1. No eclipse of his brightness: his essence shines with a fixed lustre, James i. 17. 'With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,' Psal. cii. 27. 'Thou art the same.' All created things are full of vicissitudes: 1. Princes and emperors are subject to mutation. Sesostris, an Egyptian prince, having subdued divers kings in war, made them draw like horses in his chariot, as if he intended to turn them to eat grass, as God did King Nebuchadnezzar. The crown hath many successors. 2. Kingdoms have their eclipses and convulsions: what is become of the glory of Athens? The pomp of Troy? *Jam seges est ubi Troja fuit.* Kingdoms, though they have a head of gold, yet feet of clay. 3. The heavens change, Psal. cii. 26. 'As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.'

The matter of the elements, as it is more pure, so more firm and solid; the heavens are the most ancient records, where God hath written his glory with a sun-beam, yet these shall change; though I do not think they shall be destroyed as to their substance, yet they shall be changed as to their qualities; they shall melt with fervent heat, 2 Peter iii. 12. and so be more refined and purified. Thus the heavens shall be changed, but not he who dwells in heaven; 'With him there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.' 4. The best fairs have their eclipses and changes. Look upon a Christian in his spiritual estate, and he is full of variation: Though the seed of grace doth not die, yet the beauty and activity of it doth often wither. A Christian hath his anguish fits in religion; sometimes his faith is at an high tide, sometimes low ebb; sometimes his love flames, and at another time like fire in the embers, and he hath lost his first love. How strong was David's grace at one time? 2 Sam. xxii. 3. 'The God of my rock, in him will I trust.' And at another time, 'I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.' What Christian can say, he doth not find a change in his graces; that the bow of his faith doth never unbend, the strings of his viol do never slacken? Sure we shall never meet with such Christians till we meet with them in heaven. But God is without any shadow of turning. 5. The angels were subject to change; they were created holy, but mutable, Jude 6. 'The angels which kept not their first estate.' These morning stars of heaven were falling stars. But God's glory shines with a fixed brightness. In God there is nothing looks like a change, no better or worse: no better in him, because then he were not perfect; nor worse in him, for then he should cease to be perfect: he is immutably holy, immutably good; there is no shadow of change in him.

Object. *Christ, who is God, assumed the human nature, here was a change.*

Ans. If indeed the divine nature had been converted into the human, or the human into the divine, here had been a change, but not so. The human nature was distinct from the divine, therefore there was no change. As suppose a cloud cover the sun, this makes no change in the body of the sun; so, though the divine nature be covered with the human, this makes no change in the divine nature.

2d, There is no period put to his being; 1 Tim. vi. 16. 'Who only hath immortality.' The Godhead cannot die: 1. An infinite essence cannot be changed into a finite; but God is infinite. 2. He is eternal, *ergo*, he is not mortal; to be eternal, and mortal, is a contradiction.

Use 1. See here the excellency of the divine nature in its immutability: this is the glory of the Godhead. Mutableness de-

notes weakness; it is not so in God, he is the same, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. 8. Men are fickle and mutable, like Reuben, 'unstable as water,' Gen. xlix. 4. They go in changeable colours.

1. They are changeable in their principles, (sometimes protestant, sometimes papist) if their faces altered as fast as their opinions, we should not know them.

2. Changeable in their resolutions; like the wind that blows in the east, presently turns about to the west. They resolve to be virtuous, but quickly repent of their resolutions: their minds are like a sick man's pulse, alters every half-hour; these the apostle compares to waves of the sea, and wandering stars, Jude 13. they are not pillars in God's temple, but reeds.

3. Others are changeable in their friendship, quickly love, and quickly hate; sometimes will put you in their bosom, then excommunicate you out of their favour; thus they change as the camelion, into several colours. But God is immutable.

*Use 2.* See the vanity of the creature; there are changes in every thing but in God, Psal. lxii. 9. 'Men of high degree are vanity, and men of low degree are a lie.' We look for more from the creature, than God hath put into it. The world brings changes; the creature hath two evils in it; it promiseth more than we find, and it fails us when we most need it: there is a failure *in omni*. A man desires to have his corn grinded, the water fails, and then his mill cannot go; the mariner is for a voyage, the wind either doth not blow, or it is contrary, and he cannot sail; one depends upon another for the payment of a promise, and he fails, and is like a foot out of joint. Who would look for a fixed stability in the vain creature! As if one should build houses on the sand, where the sea comes in and overflows. The creature is true to nothing but deceit, and is constant only in its disappointments. It is no more wonder to see changes fall out here below, than to see the moon dressing itself in a new shape and figure; look to meet with changes in every thing but God.

*Use 3. Comfort to the godly:* 1. In case of losses, if an estate be almost boiled away to nothing; if you lose dear friends by death, here is a double eclipse; but this is the comfort, God is unchangeable; I may lose these things, but I cannot lose my God; he never dies. When the fig-tree, and olive-tree failed, yet God did not fail, Heb. iii. 17. 'I will joy in the God of my salvation.' The flowers in the garden die, but a man's portion remains: so outward things die and change, but, Psal. lxxiii. 26. 'Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.'

2. In case of sadness of spirit, when God seems to cast off the soul in desertion, Cant. v. 6. 'My beloved had withdrawn



himself; yet God is unchangeable. He is immutable in his love; he may change his countenance, but not his heart, Jer. xxxi. 3. 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love,' Hebrew, *Gnolam*, a love of eternity. If once God's electing love riseth upon the soul, it never sets, Isa. liv. 10. 'The mountains shall be removed, but my loving-kindness shall not depart from thee, neither the covenant of my peace be removed.' God's love stands faster than the mountains: God's love to Christ is unchangeable; and he will no more cease loving believers, than he will cease loving Christ.

*Use 4. Of exhortation.* Get an interest in this unchangeable God, then thou art as a rock in the sea, immoveable in midst of all changes.

*Q. How shall I get a part in this unchangeable God?*

*Ans.* By having a change wrought in thee, 1 Cor. vi. 11. 'But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified.' Whence we are changed, *a tenebris ad lucem*, so changed, as if another soul did live in the same body; by this change we are interested in the unchangeable God.

Trust to this God only, who is unchangeable, Isa. ii. 22. 'Cease from men; leave trusting to the reed, but trust to the Rock of ages.' He that is by faith ingarrisoned in God, is safe in all changes? he is like a boat that is tied to an immoveable rock. He that trusts in God, trusts in that which cannot fail him; he is unchangeable, Heb. xiii. 5. 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' Health may leave us, riches, friends may leave us; but, saith God, I'll not leave thee; my power shall support thee; my Spirit shall sanctify thee; my mercy shall save thee: I will never leave thee. O trust in this unchangeable God. God is jealous of two things, of our love, and of our trust: He is jealous of our love, lest we love the creature more than him; therefore he makes it prove bitter: and of our trust, lest we should place more confidence in it than him, therefore he makes it prove unfaithful. Outward comforts are given us as baits by the way to refresh us, but not as crutches to lean on; if we make the creature an idol, what we make our trust, God makes our shame. O trust in the immortal God. We, like Noah's dove, have no footing for our souls, till we get into the ark of God's unchangeableness, Psal. cxxv. 1. 'They that trust in the Lord, shall be like mount Sion, which cannot be removed.'

God is unchangeable in his decree; what he hath decreed from eternity is unalterable, Isa. xlvi. 10. 'My counsel shall stand.' Argument, that God's eternal counsel or decree is immutable: If God changed his decree, it must be from some defect of wisdom or foresight in God: for that is the reason why men do change their purposes: through a want of foresight,

they see something after, which they did not see before : but this cannot be the cause why God should alter his decree, because his knowledge is perfect, he sees all things in one entire prospect before him.

*Object.* But is not God said to repent ? There seems to be a change in his decree, Jonah iii. 10. ‘ The Lord repented of the evil that he said he would do unto them.’

*Ans.* Repentance is attributed to God figuratively and improperly, Num. xxiii. 19. ‘ He is not man that he should repent.’ There may be a change in God’s work, but not in his will : God may will a change, but not change his will. “ God may change his sentence, but not his decree.” As suppose a king shall cause a sentence to be passed upon a malefactor whom he intends to save ; notwithstanding this sentence, the king doth not alter his decree : so God threatened destruction to Nineveh, Jonah iii. 4. but the people of Nineveh repenting, God spared them ; here God changed his sentence, but not his decree ; it was what had lain in the womb of his purpose from eternity.

*Object.* But if God’s decree be unchangeable, and cannot be reversed, then to what purpose should we use the means ? Our endeavours towards salvation cannot alter his decree.

*Ans.* This decree of God doth not take off my endeavour ; for he that hath decreed my salvation, hath decreed it in the use of means ; and if I neglect the means, I go about to reprobate myself. No man argues thus : God hath decreed how long I shall live, therefore, I will not use means to preserve my life, not eat and drink. God hath decreed the time of my life in the use of means ; so God hath decreed my salvation in the use of word, prayer, sacraments : and as a man that refuseth his food murders himself, so he that refuseth to work out his salvation doth destroy himself. The vessels of mercy are said to be prepared unto glory, Rom. ix. 23. How are they prepared, but by being sanctified ? and that cannot be but in the use of means ; therefore let not God’s decree take thee off from holy endeavours. A good saying of Dr. Preston, “ Hast thou an heart to pray to God ? it is sign no decree of wrath has passed against thee.”

*Use 1.* If God’s decree be eternal and unchangeable, then God doth not elect our faith foreseen, as the Arminians, Rom. ix. 11, 14. ‘ The children being not yet born, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, it was said, Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated.’ We are not elected for holiness, but to holiness ; Eph. i. 4. If we are not justified for our faith, much less elected for our faith ; but we are not justified for it : we are said to be justified through faith as an instrument, Eph. ii. 8. but not for faith as a cause ; and, if not



justified for faith, then much less elected : God's decree of election is eternal and unchangeable, therefore depends not upon faith forseen, Acts xiii. 48. 'As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.' They were not elected, because they believed, but they believed because they were elected.

*Use 2.* If God's decree be unchangeable, it is comfort in two cases, 2. Concerning God's providence towards his church. We are ready to quarrel with providence, if every thing doth not jump with our desire : remember God's work goes on, and nothing falls out but what he hath decreed from eternity. 2. God hath decreed troubles for the church's good ; the troubling of God's church is like the angels troubling the water, John v. 4. which made way for healing his people. He hath decreed troubles in the church ; 'His fire is in Sion, and his furnace in Jerusalem,' Isa. xxxi. 9. The wheels in a watch move cross one to another, but they all carry on the motion of the watch : so the wheels of providence often move cross to our desires, but still they carry on God's unchangeable decree, Dan. xii. 10. 'Many shall be made white.' God lets the waters of affliction be poured on his people, he doth but lay them a whitening. Therefore murmur not at God's dealings ; his work goes on, nothing falls out but what he hath wisely decreed from eternity ; every thing shall promote God's design, and fulfil his decree.

2. Comfort to the godly in regard of their salvation, 2 Tim. ii. 19. 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his.' God's counsel of election is unchangeable : once elected, and for ever elected, Rev. iii. 5. 'I will not blot his name out of the book of life.' The book of God's decree hath no errata in it, no blottings out : once justified never unjustified, Hof. xiii. 14. 'Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.' God never repents of his electing love, 1 John xiii. 1. 'He loved them to the end.' Therefore, if thou art a believer, comfort thyself with this, the immutability of God's decree.

*Use 3.* To conclude, a word to the wicked, who march furiously against God and his people : let them know, God's decree is unchangeable, God will not alter it, nor can they break it ; and while they resist God's will, they fulfil it. There is a twofold will of God, *Voluntas præcepti et decreti* ; the will of God's precept, and of his decree. While the wicked resist the will of God's precept, they fulfil the will of his permissive decree. Judas betrays Christ, Pilate condemns him, the soldiers crucify him, while they resisted the will of God's precept, they fulfilled the will of his permissive decree, Acts iv. 28. Such as are wicked, God commands one thing, they do the quite contrary ; to keep the sabbath they profane it ; while they disobey



his command, they fulfil his permissive decree. If a man set up two nets, one of silk, the other of iron, the silken net may be broken, not the iron : God's commands are the silken net ; while men break the silken nets of God's command, they are taken in the iron net of his decree ; while they sit backward to God's precepts, they row forward to his decree ; his decree to permit their sin, and to punish them for their sin permitted.



## OF THE WISDOM OF GOD.

THE next attribute is God's wisdom ; which is one of the brightest beams of the Godhead, Job ix. 4. ' He is wise in heart.' The heart is the seat of wisdom ; *Cor in Hebræo sumitur pro judicio*, Pineda. Among the Hebrews, the heart is put for wisdom, Job xxxiv. 34. ' Let men of understanding tell me : ' in the Hebrew ' let men of heart tell me.' God is wise in heart, that is, he is most wise : 1. God is only wise ; he doth solely and wholly possess all wisdom ; therefore he is called ' the only wise God,' 1 Tim. i. 17. All the treasures of wisdom are locked up in him, and no creature can have any wisdom, but as God is pleased to give it out of his treasury. 2. God is perfectly wise ; there is no defect in his wisdom. Men may be wise in some things, but in other things may betray imprudence and weakness. But God is the exemplar and pattern of wisdom, and the pattern must be perfect, Matth. v. 48. God's wisdom appears in two things, 1st, His infinite intelligence. 2dly, His exact working.

1. His infinite intelligence. He knows the most profound, abstruse secrets, Dan. ii. 28. He knows the thoughts, which are the most intricate subtil things, Amos iv. 13. ' He declareth to man what is his thought.' Let sin be contrived never so politically, God will pull off all masks and disguises, and make an heart-anatomy. He knows all future contingencies, *et ante intuitu*, all things are before him in one clear prospect.

2. His exact curious working. He is wise in heart ; his wisdom lies in his works. These works of God are bound up in three great volumes, where we may read his wisdom.

1. The work of *creation*. The creation, as it is a monument of God's power, so a looking-glass in which we may see his wisdom. None but a wise God could so curiously contrive the world. Behold the earth decked with variety of flowers, which are both for beauty and fragrancy : the heaven bespangled with lights ; we may see the glorious wisdom of God blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars. His wisdom is seen in the marshalling and ordering every thing in its proper place and sphere :

if the sun had been set lower, it would have burnt us; if higher, it would not have warmed us with its beams. God's wisdom is seen in appointing the seasons of the year, Psal. lxxiv. 17. 'Thou hast made summer and winter.' If it had been all summer, the heat would have scorched us, if all winter, the cold would have killed us. The wisdom of God is seen in chequering the dark and the light: if it had been all night, there had been no labour, if all day, there had been no rest. Wisdom is seen in mixing the elements, the earth with the sea: if it had been all sea, then we had wanted bread; if it had been all earth, then we had wanted water. The wisdom of God is seen in preparing and ripening the fruits of the earth, the wind and frosts prepare the fruits, the sun and rain ripen the fruits. God's wisdom is seen in setting bounds to the sea, and so wisely contriving it, that though the sea be higher than the earth, yet it should not overflow the earth; so that we may cry out with the Psalmist, Psal. civ. 24. 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.' There is nothing to be seen but miracles of wisdom. God's wisdom is seen in ordering things in the body politic, that one shall have need of another: the poor need the rich man's money, and the rich need the poor man's labour. God makes one trade depend upon another, that one may be helpful to another, and that mutual love may be preserved.

(2.) The second work wherein God's wisdom shines forth, is the work of redemption: 1. Here was the master-piece of divine wisdom, to contrive a way to happiness, between the sin of man, and the justice of God. We may cry out with the apostle, Rom. xi. 33. 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.' This posed men and angels. If God had put us to find out a way of salvation when we were lost, we could neither have had an head to devise, nor a heart to desire, what God's infinite wisdom had found out for us. Mercy had a mind to save sinners, yet loth that the justice of God should be wronged: It is a pity, saith mercy, that such a noble creature as man should be made to be undone; and yet no reason that God's justice should be a loser. What way then shall be found out? Angels cannot satisfy for the wrong done to God's justice, nor is it fit that one nature should sin, and another nature suffer: what then? Shall man be for ever lost? Now, while mercy was thus debating with itself, what to do for the recovery of fallen man, here the wisdom of God stepped in; and thus the oracle spake, Let God become man; let the second person in the Trinity be incarnate, and suffer; and so for fitness he shall be man; and for ability he shall be God: thus justice may be satisfied, and man saved. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom of God, thus to make justice and mercy to kiss each other!

great is this mystery, 'God manifested in the flesh,' 1 Tim. iii. 6. What wisdom was this, that Christ should be made sin, yet knew no sin; that God should condemn the sin, yet save the sinner? Here was wisdom, to find out the way of salvation. 2. The means by which salvation is applied set forth God's wisdom, that salvation should be by faith, not by works. Faith is an humble grace, it gives all to Christ; it is an adorer of free grace: and free grace being advanced here, God hath his glory: and it is his highest wisdom to exalt his own glory. 3. The way of working faith declares God's wisdom; it is wrought by the word preached, Rom. x. 17. 'Faith comes by hearing.' What is the weak breath of a man to convert a soul? It is like whispering in the ears of a dead man; this is foolishness in the eye of the world: but the Lord loves to shew his wisdom, by that which seems folly, 1 Cor. i. 27. 'He hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.' Why so? ver. 29. 'That no flesh should glory in his presence.' Should God convert by the ministry of angels, then we should have been ready to have gloried in angels, and have given that honour to them which is due to God; but when God works by weak tools, makes use of men who are of like passions with ourselves, and by them converts; now the power is plainly seen to be of God, 2 Cor. iv. 7. 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.' Herein is God's wisdom seen, that no flesh may glory in his presence.

(3.) The wisdom of God wonderfully appears in the works of his providence. Every providence hath either a mercy or a wonder wrapt up in it. The wisdom of God, in his works of providence, appears, 1. By effecting great things by small, contemptible means. He cured the stung Israelites, by a brazen serpent. If some sovereign antidote had been used, if the balm of Gilead had been brought, there had been some likelihood that this should have healed: but what was there in a brazen serpent? It was a mere image, and not applied to him that was wounded, only he was to look upon it, yet this wrought a cure. The less probability in the instrument, the more is God's wisdom seen. 2. The wisdom of God is seen in doing his work by that which to the eye of flesh seems quite contrary: God intended to advance Joseph, and make all his brethren's sheaves bow to his sheaf: now what way doth he take? first Joseph is thrown into the pit, then sold into Egypt; then after that put in prison, Gen. xxxix. 20. And by his imprisonment, God made way for his advancement. For God to save in an ordinary way, wisdom would not be so much taken notice of. But then he goes strangely to work, and saves in that very way in which we think he will destroy; now, his wisdom shines forth in a



most glorious conspicuous manner. God would make Israel victorious, and what way doth he go in? He lessens Gideon's army, Judg. vii. 2. 'The people that are with thee are too many:' he reduceth the army of two and thirty thousand to three hundred; and by taking away the means of victory, makes Israel victorious. God had a design to bring his people out of Egypt, and a strange course he takes to effect it: he stirred up the hearts of the Egyptians to hate them, Psal. cv. 25. 'He turned their heart to hate his people.' The more they hated and oppressed Israel, the more God plagued the Egyptians, and the more glad they were to let Israel go, Exod. xii. 33. The Egyptians were urgent upon Israel, that they might send them out of the land in haste. God had a mind to save Jonah when he was cast into the sea, and he lets the fish swallow him up, and so bring him to the shore. God would save Paul, and all that were in the ship with him, and there was no way to save them, but the ship must break, and they all came safe to land upon the broken pieces of the ship, Acts xxvii. 44. In reference to the church, God oft goes by contrary means, makes the enemy do his work; he can strike a straight stroke by crooked sticks. God hath oft made his church grow and flourish by persecution. "The showers of blood have made her more fruitful," Julian. Exod. i. 10. 'Come let us deal wisely with them lest they multiply;' and that way they took to suppress them, made them multiply, ver. 12. 'The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied:' like ground, the more it is harrowed, it bears the better crop. The apostles were scattered by reason of persecution, and their scattering was like the scattering of seed; they went up and down, and preached the gospel, and brought daily converts. Paul was put in prison, and his bonds were a means to enlarge the gospel, Phil. i. 12.

2. The wisdom of God is seen in making the most desperate evils turn to the good of his children. As several poisonable ingredients, wisely tempered by the skill of the artist, make a sovereign medicine, so God makes the most deadly afflictions, co-operate for the good of his children. He purifies them, and prepares them for heaven, 2 Cor. iv. 17. These hard frosts hasten the spring flowers of glory. The wise God, by a divine chymistry, turns afflictions into cordials. God makes his people gainers by losses, and turns their crosses into blessings.

4. The wisdom of God is seen in this, that the sins of men shall carry on God's work; yet that he should have no hand in their sin. The Lord permits sin, but doth not approve it. He hath an hand in the action in which sin is, but not in the sin of the action. As in the crucifying of Christ, so far as it was a natural action, God did concur: if he had not given the Jews life

and breath, they could not have done it : but, as it was a sinful action, so God abhorred it. A musician plays upon a viol out of tune ; the musician is the cause of the sound, but the jarring and discord is from the viol itself : so men's natural motion is from God, but their sinful motion is from themselves. A man that rides on a lame horse, his riding is the cause why the horse goes, but the lameness is from the horse itself. Herein is God's wisdom, the sins of men shall carry on his work, yet he hath no hand in them.

5. The wisdom of God is seen in helping in desperate cases. God loves to shew his wisdom when human help and wisdom fail. Exquisite lawyers love to wrestle with niceties and difficulties in the law, to shew their skill the more. God's wisdom is never at a loss ; but when providences are darkest, now appears the morning-star of deliverance, Psalm cxxxvi. 23. ' Who remembered us in our low condition.' Sometimes God melts away the spirits of his enemies, Josh. ii. 24. Sometimes he finds them other work to do, and sounds a retreat to them, as he did to Saul when he was pursuing David ; ' The Philistines are in the land.' ' In the Mount will God be seen.' When the church seems to be upon the altar, her place and liberty ready to be sacrificed, now comes the angel.

6. God's wisdom is seen in befooling wise men, and making their wisdom a means of their overthrow. Ahithophel had deep policy, 2 Sam. xvi. 23. ' The counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled, was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God : ' but he consulted his own shame. ' The Lord turned his counsel into foolishness,' 2 Sam. xvii. 23. Job v. 13. ' God taketh the wise in their own craftiness ; ' that is, when they think to deal wisely, he not only disappoints them, but ensnares them. The snares they lay for others catch themselves, Ps. ix. 16. ' In the net which they hid, is their own foot taken.' God loves to counterplot politicians ; he makes use of their own wit to undo them, and hangs Haman upon his own gallows.

*Use* 1. Adore the wisdom of God ; it is an infinite deep the angels cannot search into, Rom. xi. 32. ' His ways are past finding out.' And as we should adore, so we should rest in the wisdom of God : God sees what condition is best for us. Did we believe the wisdom of God, it would keep us from murmuring. Rest in God's wisdom in several cases : 1. In want of spiritual comfort : God is wise, he sees it good sometimes we should be without comfort. Perhaps we should be lifted up with spiritual enlargements, as Paul with his revelations, 2 Cor. xii. 7. It is hard to have the heart low, when comfort is high. God sees humility is better for us than joy. It is better to want comfort, and be humble, than to have it, and be proud. 2. In want of bodily strength, rest in God's wisdom ; he sees what is

best. Perhaps the less health the more grace ; weaker in body, the stronger we are in faith, 2 Cor. iv. 16. ‘ Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.’ At Rome there were two laurel trees : when the one withered, the other flourished. The inward man is renewed. When God shakes the tree of the body, he is now gathering the fruits of righteousness, Heb. xii. 11. Sickness is God’s lance to let out the imposthume of sin, Isa. xxvii. 9. 3. In case of God’s providences to his church : we wonder what God is doing with us, and are ready to kill ourselves with care : rest in God’s wisdom ; he knows best what he hath to do, Psal. lxxvii. 19. ‘ His footsteps are not known.’ Trust him where you cannot trace him. God is most in his way, when we think he is most out of the way ; when we think God’s church is, as it were, in the grave, and there is a tomb-stone laid upon her, God’s wisdom can roll away the stone from the sepulchre. ‘ Christ cometh leaping over mountains,’ Cant. ii. 8. Either his power can remove the mountain, or his wisdom knows how to leap over it. 4. In case we are low in the world, or have but little oil in our cruse ; rest in God’s wisdom, he sees it best ; it is to cure pride and wantonness. God knew, if thy estate had not been lost, thy soul had been lost. God, he saw riches would be a snare unto thee, 1 Tim. vi. 9. Art thou troubled that God hath prevented a snare ? God will make thee rich in faith ; what thou lackest in temporals shall be made up in spirituals : God will give thee more of his love. Thou art weak in estate, yet God will make thee strong in assurance. O rest in God’s wisdom ! he will carve the best piece for thee. 5. In case of the loss of dear friends, a wife, or child, or husband ; rest satisfied in God’s wisdom. God hath taken away these, because he would have more of your love : he breaks these crutches, that we may live more upon him by faith. God would have us learn to go without crutches.

*Use 2.* If God be infinitely wise, then let us go to him for wisdom ; as Solomon, 1 Kings iii. 9. ‘ Give thy servant an understanding heart ; and the speech pleased the Lord.’ And there is encouragement for us, ‘ If any one lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.’ James i. 5. Wisdom is in God, *tanquam in fonte*, as in the fountain ; his wisdom is imparted, not impaired ; his stock is not spent by giving. Go then to God : Lord, do thou light my lamp ; in thy light shall I see light ; give me wisdom, to know the fallacy of my heart, the subtilties of the old serpent ; to walk jealously towards myself, religiously towards thee, prudently towards others : guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.



## OF GOD'S POWER.

THE next attribute is God's power, Job ix. 19. 'If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong.' In this chapter is a magnificent description of God's power; 'Lo, he is strong.' The Hebrew word for strong, signifies a conquering, prevailing strength. 'He is strong;' the superlative degree is intended here, viz. He is most strong, He is called, *El-shaddai*, God Almighty, Gen. xvii. 1. His almightiness lies in this, he can do whatever is feasible. Divines distinguish between authority and power. God hath both.

1. He hath a sovereign right and authority over man. He can do with his creature as he pleases. Who shall dispute with God? who shall ask him a reason of his doings? Dan. iv. 35. 'He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?' God sits judge in the highest court; he calls the monarchs of the earth to the bar, and is not bound to give a reason of his proceedings, Pl. lxxv. 5, 7. 'He putteth down one, and raiseth up another.' He hath salvation and damnation in his power. He hath the key of justice in his hand, to lock up whom he will in the fiery prison of hell; and he hath the key of mercy in his hands to open heaven's gate to whom he pleases. This is the name engraven upon his vesture, 'King of kings, and Lord of lords,' Rev. xix. 16. He sits Lord paramount, and who can call him to an account? Isa. xlv. 10. 'I will do all my pleasure.' The world is God's diocese, and shall not he do what he will in his own diocese? He it was that turned king Nebuchadnezzar to eat grass, and threw the angels to hell when they sinned; that broke the head of the Babylonish empire, Isa. xiv. 12. 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer! Thy pomp is brought down to the grave.' 'Who sets bounds to the sea, and bridles the proud waves,' Job xxxviii. 11. God is the supreme monarch, all power is seated originally in him; 'And the powers that be are of God,' Rom. xiii. 1. Kings hold their crowns of him, Prov. viii. 15. 'By me kings reign.'

(2.) As God hath authority, so he hath infinite power. What is authority without power? 'He is mighty in strength,' Job ix. 4. This power of God is seen.

1. In the creation. To create, requires infinite power; all the world cannot make a fly. God's power in creating is evident, 1. Because he needs no instruments to work with; it is proper to God to work without tools. 2. He needs no matter to work upon; first, he creates matter, and then works upon it.

3. He works without labour, Pl. xxxiii. 9. 'He spake, and it was done.'

2. The power of God is seen in the conversion of souls. Surely a mighty power went to raise Christ from the grave, Eph. i. 20. (1.) The same power goes to draw a sinner to God, as drew Christ out of the grave to heaven. Greater power is put forth in conversion, than in creation. When God made the world, he met with no opposition: as he had nothing to help him, so he had nothing to hinder him: but when he comes to convert a sinner, here he meets with opposition: Satan opposeth him, and the heart opposeth him: a sinner is angry with converting grace. (2.) The world was the 'Work of God's fingers,' Pl. viii. 3. Conversion is the 'Work of God's arm,' Luke i. 5. (3.) In the creation, God wrought but one miracle, he spake the word: but, in conversion, he works many miracles: The blind is made to see, the dead is raised, the deaf hears the voice of the Son of God. O the infinite power of Jehovah! Before his sceptre, angels vail and prostrate themselves; kings cast their crowns at his feet. Amos ix. 5. 'He toucheth the mountains and they melt.' Job ix. 6. 'He removeth the earth out of her place.' An earthquake makes the earth tremble upon her pillars, but God shakes it out of its place; he can remove the earth from its centre. God can do what he will, his power is as large as his will. Were men's power as large as their will, what work would they make in the world! God's power is of equal extent with his will. God can with a word unpin the wheels, and break the axle-tree of the creation. He can do 'more than we can think,' Eph. iii. 20. He can suspend natural agents: he sealed up the lions' mouth, made the fire not to burn: he made the waters to stand upon an heap: he caused the sun to go ten degrees backward in Ahaz's dial, Isa. xlii. 8. What can oppose omnipotency? 'The Lord cuts off the spirit of princes.' Pl. lxxvi. 12. He counter-works his enemies; he pulls down their flags and banners of pride, infatuates their counsels, breaks their forces; and he doth it with ease, with the turning of his hand, Psal. lxxxi. 24. 'with his breath,' Isa. xl. 24. 'with a look.' That is all it needs cost God to destroy his enemies; a look, a cast of his eye, Exod. xiv. 24. 'The Lord looked into the host of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire, and troubled their host.' Who shall stop him in his march? God commands, and all creatures in heaven and earth obey him. Xerxes, the Persian monarch, threw fetters into the sea, when its waves swelled, as if he would have chained up the waters; but when God speaks, the wind and sea obey him; if he say but the word, the stars fight in their courses against Sisera; if he stamp with his foot, an army of angels shall presently be in battalia. What cannot omnipotent power

do? 'The Lord is a man of war,' Exod. xv. 3 'He hath a mighty arm,' Pl. lxxxix. 13. 'God's power is a glorious power,' Col. i. 11. 1. It is an irresistible power, Rom. ix. 19. 'Who hath resisted his will?' To contest with him, is as if the thorns should set themselves in battle array against the fire; or as if an infirm child should fight with an arch-angel. If the sinner be once taken in God's iron net, there is no escaping, Isa. xliii. 13. 'There is none that can deliver out of my hand.' 2 God's power is an inexhaustible power; it is never spent or wasted. Men, while they exercise their strength, weaken it; but God hath an everlasting spring of strength in him, Isa. xxvi. 4. 'Tho' he spends his arrows upon his enemies, Deut. xxxii. 23. yet he doth not spend his strength, Isa. xl. 28. 'He fainteth not, neither is weary.'

*Object. Can God do all things? he cannot deny himself.*

*Ans.* Though God can do all things, he cannot do that which stains the glory of his Godhead: he cannot sin; he cannot do that which implies a contradiction. To be a God of truth, and yet deny himself, is a contradiction.

*Use 1.* If God be so infinite in power, fear this great God. We are apt to fear such as are in power; Jer. v. 32. 'Fear ye not me?' saith the Lord: 'Will ye not tremble at my presence?' He hath power to cast our souls and bodies into hell, Plal. xc. 11. 'Who knows the power of his wrath?' God can with the same breath that made us, dissolve us; 'His eyes are as a flame of fire; the rocks are thrown down by him,' Nah. i. 6. Solomon saith, 'Where the word of a king is, there is power,' Eccl. viii. 4. much more where the word of a God is. O let us fear this mighty God! The fear of God will drive out all other base fear.

*Use 2.* See the deplorable condition of wicked men: 1. This power of God is not for them: 2. It is against them.

1. This power of God is not for them: they have no union with God, therefore have no warrant to lay claim to his power. His power is no relief to them. He hath power to forgive sins, but he will not put forth his power towards an impenitent sinner. God's power is on eagle's wings, to carry the saints to heaven; but what privilege is that to the wicked; though a man will carry his child in his arms over a dangerous water, yet he will not carry an enemy in his arms. God's power is not engaged to help those that fight against him. Let miseries come upon the wicked, they have none to help them; they are like a ship in a storm without a pilot, driven upon the rocks.

2. This power of God is against the wicked. God's power will not be the sinners shield to defend him, but a sword to wound him. God's power will bind the sinner in chains. God's power serves to revenge the wrong done to his mercy. God



will be Almighty to damn the sinner. Now, in what condition is every unbeliever; God's power is engaged against him, and 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,' Heb. x. 31.

*Use 3.* It reproves such as do not believe this power of God. We say, we do not doubt of God's power, but his will. But indeed it is God's power that we question. 'Is any thing too hard for God?' Jer. xxxii. 27. yet we stagger through unbelief as if the arm of God's power were shrunk, and he could not help in desperate cases. Take away a king's power, and we unking him; take away the Lord's power, and we un-god him; yet how guilty of this are we! Did not Israel question God's power! 'Can he prepare a table in the wilderness?' Psal. lxxviii. 19. they thought the wilderness was a fitter place for making of graves, than spreading of a table. Did not Martha doubt of Christ's power? John xi. 39. 'He hath been dead four days.' If Christ had been there while Lazarus was sick, or when he had been newly dead, Martha did not question but Christ could have raised him; but he had lain in the grave four days, and now she seemed to question his power. Christ had as much ado to raise her faith, as to raise her dead brother. And Moses, though an holy man, yet limits God's power through unbelief, Numb. xi. 21. 'The people among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh for a whole month: shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered for them to suffice them? And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Is the Lord's hand waxed short?' This is a great affront to God, to go to deny his power. That men doubt of God's power, appears, 1. By their taking indirect courses. Would they defraud in their dealings, use false weights, if they believed the power of God, that he could provide for them? 2. By their depending more upon second causes than upon God, 2 Chron. xvi. 12. 'In his disease, he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.'

*Use 1.* If God be infinite in power, then let us take heed of hardening our hearts against God, Job ix. 4. 'Who hath hardened himself against him, and prospered?' Job sends a challenge to all creatures in heaven and earth, Who is he did ever take up the bucklers against God, and came off conqueror? For a person to go on daringly in any sin, is to harden his heart against God, and, as it were, to raise a war against heaven; and let him remember God is *El-shaddai*, almighty; he will be too hard for them that oppose him, Job xl. 9. 'Hast thou an arm like God?' Such as will not bow to his golden sceptre, shall be broken with his iron rod. Julian hardened his heart against God, he opposed him to his face; but what got he at last? did he prosper? Being wounded in battle, he threw up his blood

into the air, and said to Christ, *Vicisti Galilæe*, 'O Galilean, thou hast overcome;' I acknowledge thy power, whose name and truth I have opposed. Will folly contend with wisdom? Weakness with power? finite with infinite? O take heed of hardening your heart against God! He can send legions of angels to avenge his quarrel. It is better to meet God with tears in your eyes, than weapons in your hand. You may overcome God sooner by repentance, than by resistance.

*Use 5.* Get an interest in God, and then this glorious power is engaged for you. God gives it under his hand, that he will put forth the whole power of his Godhead for the good of his people, 1 Chron. xvii. 24. 'The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel.' This almightiness of God's power is a wonderful support and comfort to every believer. It was Samson's riddle, Judg. xiv. 14. 'Out of the strong came forth sweetness:' So out of the attribute of God's power, out of this strong comes forth sweetness: It is comfort in several cases,

1. In case of strong corruption. My sins, saith a child of God, are potent; I have no power against this army that comes against me: I pray, and humble my soul by fasting, but my sins return upon me. Ay, but dost thou believe the power of God? The strong God can conquer thy strong corruption; though sin be too hard for thee, yet not for him; he can soften hard hearts, quicken the dead. 'Is any thing too hard for the Lord?' Gen. xviii. 14. Set God's power on work. By faith and prayer, say, Lord! it is not for thy honour that the devil should have so strong a party within me; O break the head of this leviathan; Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee.

2. In case of strong temptation. Satan is called the strong man: O but remember the power of God; Christ is called, 'The lion of the tribe of Judah,' he hath broken the serpent's head upon the cross. Satan is a chained enemy, and a conquered enemy: Michael is stronger than the dragon.

3. Comfort in case of weakness of grace, and fear of falling away. I pray, but I cannot send out strong cries; I believe, but hand of my faith doth shake and tremble. Cannot God strengthen weak grace? 2 Cor. xii. 9. 'My strength is made perfect in weakness: most gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.' I fear I shall not hold out. Christian, dost thou believe the power of God? Hath not God preserved thy grace thus far? Maigest thou not set up thy Ebenezer? God hath kept thy grace hitherto as a spark in the main ocean. And is not he able still to keep thy grace? 1 Pet. i. 5. 'We are kept by the power of God,' &c. God's mercy pardons us, but his power preserves us. He who by his power keeps the stars that they do not fall out of their orb, keeps our grace that it doth not fail or annihilate.

4. Comfort in case of the deficiency in thy estate, God can multiply the oil in the cruise; miraculously he can raise up supplies: God, who provides for the birds of the air, cannot he provide for his children? He that clothes the lilies, cannot he clothe his lambs?

5. Comfort in regard of the resurrection. This seems difficult to believe, that the bodies of men when eaten up by worms, devoured by beasts and fishes, or consumed to ashes, should be raised the same numerical bodies; but if we believe the power of God, it is no great wonder; which is hardest, to create, or raise the dead: he that can make a body of nothing, can restore it to its parts, when mingled and confounded with other substances, Mat. xix. 26. 'With God all things are possible.' If we believe the first article of the creed, That God is almighty, we may quickly believe the other article, The resurrection of the body. God can raise the dead because of his power, and he cannot but raise them, because of his truth.

6. It is comfort in reference to the church of God: he can save and deliver it when it is brought low. The enemies have power in their hand, but the remainder of wrath God will restrain, Psal. lxxvi. 10. God can either confine the enemies power or confound it: 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' God can create Jerusalem a praise, Isa. lxxv. 8. The church in Ezekiel, is compared to dry bones, but God made breath to enter into them, and they lived, Ezek. xxxvii. 10. The ship of the church may be tossed, because sin is in it, but it shall not be overwhelmed, because Christ is in it, Psalm xli. 5. *Deus in medio.* All the church's pangs shall help forward her deliverance.



## OF THE HOLINESS OF GOD.

THE next attribute is God's holiness, Exod. xv. 11. 'Glorious in holiness.' Holiness is the most sparkling jewel of his crown; it is the name by which God is known, Psal. cxi. 9. 'Holy and reverend is his name.' 'He is the Holy One,' Job vi. 10. 'Seraphims cry, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory,' Isa. vi. 3. His power makes him mighty, his holiness makes him glorious: God's holiness consists in his perfect loving of righteousness, and abhorrency of evil, Hab. i. 13. 'Of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity.'

1<sup>st</sup>, God is holy intrinsically: 1. He is holy in his nature; his very being is made up of holiness, as light is of the essence of the sun. 2. He is holy in his word; the word bears a stamp



of his holiness upon it, as the wax bears an impression of the seal, Psal. cxix. 140. 'Thy word is very pure;' it is compared to silver refined seven times, Psal. xii. 6. Every line in the word breathes sanctity, it encourgeth nothing but holiness. 3. God is holy in his operations, all God doth is holy: he cannot act but like himself; he can no more do an unrighteous action, than the sun can darken, Psal. cxlv. 17. 'The Lord is holy in all his works.'

2dly, God is holy primarily: he is the original and pattern of holiness; holiness began at him who is the Ancient of days.

3dly, God is holy efficiently: he is the cause of all that holiness in others, James i. 17. 'Every good and perfect gift comes from above.' He made the angels holy; he infused all that holiness into Christ's human nature: all the holiness we have is but a crystal stream from this fountain. We borrow all our holiness from God; as the lights of the sanctuary were lighted from the middle lamp, so all the holiness of others is a lamp lighted from heaven, Lev. xx. 8. 'I am the Lord which sanctify you.' God is not only a pattern of holiness, but he is a principle of holiness: his spring feeds all our cisterns, he drops his holy oil of grace upon us.

4thly, God is holy transcendently, 1 Sim. ii. 2. 'There is none so holy as the Lord:' no angel in heaven can take the just dimensions of God's holiness. The highest seraphim is too low of stature, to measure these pyramids: the holiness in God is far above the holiness in saints or angels.

1. It is above the holiness in saints, 1. It is a pure holiness: the saints' holiness is like gold in the ore, imperfect; their humility is stained with pride; he that hath most faith had need pray, 'Lord, help my unbelief,' but the holiness of God is pure, like wine from the grape: it hath not the least dath or tincture of impurity mixed with it. 2. A more unchangeable holiness: the saints, though they cannot lose the habit of holiness (for the seed of God remains), yet they may lose some degrees of their holiness, Rev. ii. 4. 'Thou hast left thy first love.' Grace cannot die, yet the flame of it may go out; holiness in the saints is subject to ebbing, but holiness in God is unchangeable; he never lost a drop of his holiness: as he cannot have more holiness, because he is perfectly holy; so he cannot have less holiness, because he is unchangeably holy.

2. The holiness in God is above the holiness in the angels; holiness in the angels is only a quality, which may be lost, as we see in the fallen angels: but holiness in God is his essence, he is all over holy, and he can as well lose his Godhead, as his holiness.

Object. *But is he not privy to all the sins of men? He beholds their impurities; how can this be, and he not be defiled?*

*Ans.* God sees all the sins of men, but is no more defiled with them, than the sun is defiled with the vapours that arise out of the earth : God sees sin, not as a patron to approve it, but as a judge to punish it.

*Use 1.* Is God so infinitely holy ? Then see how unlike to God sin is : Sin is an unclean thing, it is hyperbolically evil, Rom. i. 13. It is called an abomination, Deut. vii. 25. God hath no mixture of evil in him : sin hath no mixture of good ; it is the spirit and quintessence of evil ; it turns good into evil ; it hath deflowered the virgin-foul, made it red with guilt, and black with filth : it is called the accursed thing, Josh. vii. 11. No wonder, therefore, that God doth so hate sin, being so unlike to him, nay, so contrary to him : it strikes at his holiness ; sin doth all it can to spite God ; sin would not only unthrone God, but ungod him ; if sin could help it, God should be God no longer.

*Use 2.* Is God the Holy One, and is his holiness his glory ? Then how impious are they, (1.) That are haters of holiness ? As the vulture hates perfumes, so they hate this sweet perfume of holiness in the saints ; their hearts rise against holiness : as a man's stomach at a dish he hath an antipathy against. There is not a greater sign of a person devoted to hell, than to hate one for that thing wherein he is most like God, his holiness. (2.) That are despisers of holiness : they despise the glory of the Godhead, 'Glorious in holiness.' The despising of holiness is seen in the deriding of it ; is it not sad, men should deride that which should save them ? Sure that patient will die that derides the physic. The deriding the grace of the Spirit comes near to the despising the Spirit of grace. Scoffing Ishmael was cast out of Abraham's house, Gen. xxi. 9. Such as scoff at holiness, shall be cast out of heaven.

*Use 2. Of Exhortation :* Is God so infinitely holy, then let us endeavour to imitate God in holiness, 1 Pet. i. 16. 'Be ye holy for I am holy.' There is a twofold holiness, an holiness of equality, and an holiness of similitude : an holiness of equality no man or angel can reach to ; who can be equally holy with God ? Who can parallel him in sanctity ? But, 2. There is an holiness of similitude, and that we must aspire after, to have some analogy and resemblance of God's holiness in us ; be as like him in holiness as we can : though a taper doth not give so much light as the sun, yet it doth resemble it. We must imitate God in holiness.

*Qu. Must we be like God in holiness, wherein doth our holiness consist ?*

*Ans.* In two things, 1<sup>st</sup>, In our suitableness to God's nature. 2<sup>dly</sup>, Our subjection to his will.

1. Our holiness stands in our suitableness to the nature of

God : hence the saints are said to partake of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. which is not a partaking of his essence, but his image. Herein is the saints holiness, when they are the lively pictures of God : they bear the image of God's meekness, mercifulness, heavenliness ; they are of the same judgment with God, of the same disposition ; they love what he loves, and hate what he hates.

2. Our holiness consists in our subjection to the will of God : as God's nature is the pattern of holiness, so his will is the rule of holiness. This is our holiness, (1.) When we do his will, Acts xiii. 22. (2.) When we bear his will, Mic. vii. 9. what he inflicts wisely, we suffer willingly. This is our holiness, when we are suitable to God's nature, and submissive to his will ; this should be our great care, to be like God in holiness ; our holiness should be so qualified as God's ; God's is a real holiness, such should ours be, Eph. iv. 24. ' Righteousness and true holiness : ' It should not be only the paint of holiness, but the life of holiness ; it should not only be like the Egyptian temples, beautified without, but like Solomon's temple, gold within, Psal. xlv. 13. ' The king's daughter is all glorious within.' That I may press you to resemble God in holiness, consider

1. How illustrious every holy person is ; he is a fair glass in which some of the beams of God's holiness shines forth. We read, Aaron put on his garments for glory and beauty, Exod. xxviii. 2. When we wear the embroidered garment of holiness, it is for glory and beauty. A good Christian is ruddy, being sprinkled with Christ's blood ; and white, being adorned with holiness. As the diamond to a ring, so is holiness to the soul, that, as Chrysostom saith, they that oppose it, cannot but admire it.

2. It is the great design God carries on in the world, to make a people like himself in holiness : what are all the showers of the ordinances for, but to rain down righteousness upon us, and make us holy ? What are the promises for, but to encourage holiness ? What is the sending of the Spirit into the world for, but to anoint us with the holy unction ? 1 John ii. 20. What are all afflictions for, but to make us partakers of God's holiness ? Heb. xii. 10. What are mercies for ; but loadstones to draw us to holiness ? What is the end of Christ's dying, but that his blood might wash away our unholiness ? Tit. ii. 14. ' Who gave himself for us, to purify unto himself a peculiar people.' So that if we are not holy, we cross God's great design in the world.

3. It is our holiness draws God's heart to us : Holiness is God's image : God cannot choose but love his image where he sees it. A king loves to see his effigies upon a piece of coin : Psal. xlv. ' Thou lovest righteousness.' And where doth righ-



teousness grow, but in an holy heart? Isa. lxii. 4. 'Thou shalt be called *Hephzibah*, for the Lord delighted in thee.' It was her holiness drew God's love to her, verse 12. 'They shall call them the holy people.' God values not any by their high birth, but their holiness.

4. Holiness is the only thing that differenceth us from the reprobate part of the world: God's people have his seal upon them, 2 Tim. ii. 19. 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. And let all that name the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.' The people of God are sealed with a double seal, 1. Election, 'The Lord knows who are his.' 2. Sanctification, 'Let every one depart from iniquity.' As a nobleman is distinguished from another by his silver star; as a virtuous woman is distinguished from an harlot by her chastity; so holiness distinguisheth between the two seeds: all that are of God, as they have Christ for their captain, Heb. ii. 10. so holiness is the white colour they wear.

5. Holiness is our honour. Holiness and honour put together, 1 Thess. iv. 4. Dignity goes along with sanctification, Rev. i. 6. 'He hath washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings unto God.' When we are washed and made holy, then we are kings and priests to God. The saints are called vessels of honour; they are called jewels, for the sparkling of their holiness, because filled with wine of the Spirit: this makes them earthly angels.

6. Holiness gives us boldness with God, Job xxiii. 26. 'Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.' Lifting up the face is an emblem of boldness. Nothing can make us so ashamed to go to God, as sin: a wicked man in prayer may lift up his hands, but he cannot lift up his face. When Adam had lost his holiness, he lost his confidence; he hid himself. But the holy person goes to God, as a child to his father; his conscience doth not upbraid him with allowing any sin, therefore he can go boldly to the throne of grace, and have mercy to help in time of need, Heb. iv. 16.

7. Holiness gives peace: sin raiseth a storm in the conscience, *Ubi peccatum ibi procella*, Isa. lvii. 21. 'There is no peace to the wicked.' Righteousness and peace are put together. Holiness is the root which bears this sweet fruit of peace; righteousness and peace kiss each other.

8. Holiness leads to heaven: holiness is the king of heaven's high-way, Isa. xxxv. 8. 'An high-way shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness.' At Rome there was the temple of virtue and honour, and they were to go through the temple of virtue to the temple of honour: so we must go through the temple of holiness to the temple of heaven. Glory begins in virtue, 2 Pet. 1. 3. 'Who hath called us to glory and

virtue?' happiness is nothing else but the quintessence of holiness; holiness is glory militant, and happiness holiness triumphant.

*Q. What shall we do to resemble God in holiness?*

*Ans.* Have recourse to Christ's blood by faith; it is *lavacrum animæ*, legal purifications: were types and emblems of it, 1 John i. 7. The word is a glass to shew us our spots, and Christ's blood is a fountain to wash them away.

2. Pray for an holy heart, Ps. li. 10. 'Create in me a clean heart, O God.' Lay thy heart before the Lord, and say, Lord, my heart is full of leprosy; it defiles all it toucheth: Lord, I am not fit to live with such an heart, for I cannot honour thee; nor die with such an heart, for I cannot see thee. O create in me a clean heart; send thy Spirit unto me, to refine and purify me, that I may be a temple fit for thee the holy God to inhabit.

3. Walk with them that are holy, Prov. xiii. 20. 'He that walketh with the wise shall be wise.' Be among the spices, and you will smell of them. Association begets assimilation: nothing hath a greater power and energy to effect holiness than the communion of saints.

## OF GOD'S JUSTICE

THE next attribute is God's justice: all God's attributes are identical, and are the same with his essence. Though he hath several attributes whereby he is made known to us, yet he hath but one essence. A cedar tree may have several branches, yet it is but one cedar. So there are several attributes of God whereby we conceive of him, but one entire essence. Well then, concerning God's justice, Deut. xxxii. 4. 'Just and right is he.' Job xxxvii. 23. 'Touching the Almighty; we cannot find him out; he is excellent in plenty of justice.' God is said to dwell in justice, Psal. lxxxix. 14. 'Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne.' In God power and justice meet. Power holds the sceptre, and justice holds the balance.

*Q. What is God's justice?*

*Ans.* "Justice is to give every one his due." God's justice is the rectitude of his nature, whereby he is carried to the doing of that which is righteous and equal; Prov. xxiv. 12. 'Shall not he render to every man according to his works?' God is an impartial judge; he judgeth the cause: men oft judge the person, but not the cause; which is not justice, but malice: God judgeth the cause, Gen. xviii. 21. 'I will go down and see whether they have done according to the cry which is come up

unto me.' When the Lord is upon a punitive act, he weighs things in the balance, he doth not punish rashly ; he doth not go in the way of a riot, but a circuit, against offenders. Concerning God's justice, I shall lay down these six positions.

1. God cannot but be just. His holiness is the cause of his justice. Holiness will not suffer him to do any thing but what is righteous. He can be no more unjust than he can be unholy.

2. God's will is the supreme rule of justice ; it is the standard of equity. His will is wise and good. God wills nothing but what is just ; and therefore it is just because he wills it.

3. God doth justice voluntarily : justice flows from his nature. Men may act unjustly, because they are bribed or forced : God will not be bribed, because of his justice ; he cannot be forced, because of his power. He doth justice out of love to justice, Heb. i. 9. ' Thou lovest righteousness.'

4. Justice is the perfection of the divine nature. Aristotle saith, " justice comprehends in it all virtues." To say God is just, is to say, he is all that is excellent : perfections meet in him, as lines in a centre. He is not only just, but justice itself.

5. God never did, nor can do the least wrong to his creature. God's justice hath been wronged, but never did any wrong. God doth not go according to the *summum jus*, or rigour of the law ; he abates something of his severity. He might inflict heavier penalties than he doth, Ezra ix. 14. ' Tho hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve ;' our mercies are more than we deserve, and our punishments less.

6. God's justice is such, that it is not fit for any man or angel to expostulate with God, or demand a reason of his actions. God hath not only authority on his side, but equity : ' He lays judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet,' Isa. xxviii. 17. and it is below him to give an account to us of his proceedings. Which of these two is fittest to take place, God's justice or man's reason ; Rom. ix. 20. ' Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God ?' The plumb line of our reason is too short to fathom the depth of God's justice, Rom. xi. 33. ' How unsearchable are his judgments ?' We are to adore God's justice, where we cannot see a reason of it.

Now God's justice runs in two channels : It is seen in two things, the distribution of rewards and punishments.

1. In rewarding the virtuous ; Pf. lviii. 11. ' verily there is a reward for the righteous.' The saints shall not serve him for nought, he will reward *præces et lachrymas* ; though they may be losers for him, they shall not be losers by him, Heb. vi. 10. ' God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which you have shewed to his name.' He gives a re-



ward, not that we have deserved it, but because he hath promised it.

2. He is just in punishing offenders. And he is just, 1. Because he punisheth sinners by a law. 'Where there is no law there is no transgression,' Rom. iv. 15. But God hath given men a law, and they break it, therefore he punisheth them justly. 2. God is just in punishing the wicked; because he never punished them, but upon full proof and evidence. What greater evidence than for a man's own conscience to be witness against him? There is nothing God chargeth upon a sinner, but conscience doth set seal to the truth of it.

*Use* 1. See here another flower of God's crown, he is just and righteous. He is the exemplar and pattern of justice.

*Obj.* But how doth it seem to stand with God's justice, that the wicked should prosper in the world? Prov. xii. 1. 'Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper' This hath been a great stumbling, and been ready to make many question God's justice. Such as the highest in sin, are highest in power. Diogenes seeing Harpalus a thief go on prosperously, said, "Sure God hath cast off the government of the world, and minded not how things went here below."

*Ans.* 1. The wicked may be sometimes instruments to do God's work; though they do not design his glory, yet they may promote it. Cyrus, (Ezra i. 7.) was instrumental in the building of God's temple in Jerusalem. There is some kind of justice, that they should have a temporal reward: God lets them prosper, under whose wing his people are sheltered. God will not be in any man's debt, Mal. i. 10. 'who hath kindled a fire on my altar for nought?'

2. God lets men go on in sin, and prosper, that he may leave them more inexcusable, Rev. ii. 21. 'I gave her space to repent of her fornication.' God adjourns the sessions, spins out his mercies towards sinners: and if they repent not, his patience will be a witness against them, and his justice will be more cleared in their condemnation, Ps. li. 4. 'That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.'

3. God doth not always let the wicked prosper in their sin; some he doth punish openly, that his justice may be taken notice of, Psal. ix. 16. 'The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth:' that is, his justice is seen by striking men dead in the very act of sin. Thus he struck Zimri and Cozbi in the act of uncleanness.

4. If God let men prosper a while in their sin, his vial of wrath is all this while filling; his sword is all this time whetting: and though God may forbear men a while, yet long forbearance is no forgiveness. The longer God is in taking his

blow, the heavier it will be at last : as long as there is eternity, God hath time enough to reckon with his enemies.

Justice may be as a lion asleep, but at last this lion will awake, and roar upon the sinner. Do not Nero and Julian and Cain now meet with God's justice.

*Obj.* But God's own people suffer great afflictions, they are injured and persecuted, Ps. lxxiii. 14. All the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning. How doth this stand with God's justice ?

*Ans.* 1. That is a true rule of St. Austin, *Judicia Dei possunt esse occulta, non injusta* : " God's ways of judgment are sometimes secret, but never unjust." The Lord never afflicts his people without a cause ; so that he cannot be unjust. There is some good in the godly, therefore the wicked afflict them ; there is some evil in them, therefore God afflicts them. God's own children have their blemishes, 2 Chron. xxviii. 10. ' Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord ? ' These spiritual diamonds have they no flaws ? Do we not read of the ' spots of God's children ? ' Deut. xxxii. 10. Are not they guilty of much pride, censoriousness, passion, worldliness ? Tho' by their profession, they seem to resemble the birds of paradise, to fly above and feed upon the dew of heaven : yet, as the serpent, they lick the dust. And these sins of God's people do more provoke God than others, Deut. xxxii. 19. ' Because of the provoking of his sons and daughters.' The sins of others pierce Christ's side, these wound his heart : therefore is not God just in all the evils that befall them ? Amos iii. 2. ' You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for your iniquities.' I will punish you sooner, surer, forer than others.

3. The trials and sufferings of the godly are to refine and purify them. God's furnace is in Sion, Isa. xxxi. 9. Is it any injustice in God to put his gold into the furnace to purify it ? Is it any injustice in God, by afflicting his people, to make them partakers of his holiness ? Heb. xii. 10. What doth more proclaim God's faithfulness, than to take a course with them as may make them better ? Ps. cxix. 75. ' In faithfulness thou hast corrected me.'

3. What injustice is it in God to inflict a lesser punishment, and prevent a greater ? The best of God's children have that in them, which is meritorious of hell : now, I pray, doth God do them any wrong, if he useth only the rod, where they have deserved the scorpion ? Is the father unjust, if he only corrects his child, who hath deserved to be disinherited ? If God deals so favourably with his children, he only puts wormwood in their cup, whereas he might put fire and brimstone : they are rather to admire his mercy, than complain of his injustice.

*Obj.* How can it stand with God's justice, that all men, being equally guilty by nature, God should pass by one and save another? Why doth not he deal with all alike?

*Ans.* Rom. ix. 14. 'Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.' Job viii. 3. 'Doth the Almighty pervert justice?'

1. God is not bound to give an account of his actions to his creatures. If none may say to a king, 'What doest thou?' Eccl. viii. 4. much less to God. It is sufficient: God is Lord paramount, he hath a sovereign power over his creatures, therefore can do no injustice, Rom. ix. 21. 'Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?' God hath a liberty left in his own breast, to save one, and not another; and his justice is not at all impeached or blemished. If two men owe you money, you may, without any injustice, remit the debt to one, and exact it of the other. If two malefactors be condemned to die, the king may pardon the one, and not the other: he is not unjust if he lets one suffer, because he offended the law; nor if he save the other, because he will make use of his prerogative as he is king. 2. Though some are saved and others perish, yet there is no unrighteousness in God; because, whoever perisheth, his destruction is of himself, Hos. xiii. 9. 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.' God offers grace, the sinner refuseth it; is God bound to give grace? If a chirurgeon comes to heal a man's wound, he will not be healed, but bolts out his chirurgeon; is the chirurgeon bound to heal him? Prov. i. 24. 'I have called, and ye refused.' Psal. lxxxi. 11. 'Israel would none of me.' God is not bound to force his mercies upon men: if they wilfully oppose the offer of grace, their sin is to be taxed as the cause of their perishing, and not God's justice.

2. See the difference between God and a great part of the world. They are unjust, 1. In their courts of judicature; they pervert justice, Isa. x. 1. 'They decree unrighteous decrees.' The Hebrew word for a judge's robe, signifies prevarication, deceit, or injustice: it is often truer of the judge than of the robe; the judge deserves rather to have that name than the robe. What is a good law, without a good judge? Injustice lies in two things, either not to punish where there is a fault, or, to punish where there is no fault! how frequent! again, (2.) Unjust in their dealings. This is, 1. Either in using false weights, Hos. xii. 7. 'The balances of deceit are in his hand.' It is sad, to have the Bible in one hand, and false weights in the other. Or, 2. In adulterating commodities, Isa. i. 22. 'Thy wine is mixed with water;' when they mix bad grain with good, yet sell it for pure grain. I can never believe he is good in the first table, who is not good in the second. He can-



not be godly who is not just. Though God doth not bid you be omnipotent, as he is, yet be just, as he is.

*Use 2.* Imitate God in justice. Let Christ's golden maxim be observed, Mat. vii. 22. 'What you would have men to do to you, do ye even so to them.' You would not have them wrong you, neither do you them; rather suffer wrong, than do wrong, 1 Cor. vi. 7. 'Why do ye not rather take wrong?' O be exemplary for justice! Let justice be your ornament, Job xxix. 14. 'I put on righteousness (viz. justice) as a robe and a diadem.' A robe, for its graceful beauty; and I put it on, *et enduebam justitiam*. A judge puts on his robe, and puts it off again at night, but Job did so put on justice, as he did not put it off till death, *semper vestiti*. We must not lay off this robe of justice, till we lay down our tabernacle. If you have any thing of God in you, you will be like him. By every unjust action you do deny yourselves to be Christians, you stain the glory of your profession; heathens will rise up in judgment against you: the sun might sooner alter his course than he could be turned from doing justice.

*Use 3.* If God be just, there will be a day of judgment. Now things are out of course; sin is rampant, saints are wronged, they are often cast in a righteous cause, they can meet with no justice here, justice is turned into wormwood; but there is a day coming, when God will set things right; he will do every man justice; he will crown the righteous, and condemn the wicked, Acts xvii. 31. 'He hath appointed a day,' &c. If God be a just God, he will take vengeance. God hath given men a law to live by, they break it; there must be a day for the execution of offenders: a law not executed, is but like a wooden dagger, for a shew. At the last day, God's sword shall be drawn out against offenders; then his justice shall be revealed before all the world,——'God will judge in righteousness,' Acts xvii. 31. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' Gen. xviii. 25. The wicked shall drink a sea of wrath; but not sip one drop of injustice. At that day shall all mouths be stopt, and God's justice shall be fully vindicated from all the cavils and clamours of unjust men.

*Use 4.* Comfort to the true penitent; as God is a just God, he will pardon him. *Homo agnoscit, Deus ignoscit*. 1 John i. 9. 'If we confess our sins, (i. e. *confess and forsake*) he is just to forgive us our sins.' Not only merciful but just? Why just? Because he hath promised to forgive such? Prov. xxviii. 13. If thy heart hath been broken for and from sin, thou mayest not only plead God's mercy, but his justice for the pardoning thy sin. Shew him his hand and seal, he cannot deny himself.

## THE MERCY OF GOD.

THE next attribute is God's goodness or mercy : mercy is the result and effect of God's goodness, Pf. xxxiii. 5. Pf. cxiv. 64. So then this is the next attribute, God's goodness or mercy. The most learned of the heathens thought they gave their god Jupiter two golden characters, when they styled him *Good* and *Great* ; both these meet in God, *Goodness* and *Greatness*, majesty and mercy.

God is, 1. Essentially good in himself. And 2. Relatively good to us. They are both put together, Pf. cxix. 68. 'Thou art good, and doest good.' This relative goodness is nothing else but his mercy, which is an innate propenseness in God, to pity and succour such as are in misery. Concerning God's mercy.

Ist, I shall lay down these twelve positions, 1. It is the great design of the scripture to represent God as merciful. This is a loadstone to draw sinners to him, Exod. xxxiv. 6. 'The Lord merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness,' &c. Here are six expressions to set forth God's mercy, and but one to set forth his justice : who will by no means clear the guilty, Pf. lviii. 10. 'God's mercy, is far above the heavens,' cviii. 4. God is represented as a King and a rainbow was about his throne, Rev. iv. 23. The rainbow was an emblem of mercy, the scripture doth oftner represent God in his white robes of mercy than with his garments rolled in blood ; oftner with his golden sceptre, than his iron rod.

*Position 2.* God is more inclinable to mercy than wrath. Mercy is his darling attribute, which he most delights in, Mic. vii. 13. 'Mercy pleaseth him.' It is delightful to the mother, saith Chrysostom, to have her breasts drawn : so it is to God, to have the breasts of his mercy drawn, Isa. xlvii. 4. 'Fury is not in me ;' that is, I do not delight in it. Acts of severity are rather forced from God, he doth not afflict willingly, Lam. iii. 33. The bee naturally gives honey, it stings only when it is provoked ; God doth not punish till he can bear no longer, Jer. xlv. 22. 'So that the Lord could bear no longer, because of the evil of your doings.' Mercy is God's right hand, that he is most used to ; inflicting of punishment is called God's strange work, Isa. xxviii. 21. He is not used to it. And when the Lord would shave off the pride of a nation, he is said to hire a razor, as if he had none of his own, Isa. vii. 20. 'He shall shave with a razor that is hired.' 'He is slow to anger,' Psal. ciii. 28. 'But ready to forgive,' Psal. lxxxvi. 5.

*Position 3.* There is no condition, but we may spy mercy

in it: when the church was in captivity, she cries out, 'It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed,' Lam. iii. 22. Geographers write of Syracuse in Sicily; it is so situated, that the sun is never out of sight. In all afflictions we may see some sun-shine of mercy. That outward and inward troubles do not come together, is mercy.

*Position 4.* Mercy sweetens all God's other attributes: God's holiness without mercy, and his justice without mercy, were terrible. When the water was bitter, and Israel could not drink, Moses cast a tree into the water, and then they were made sweet. How bitter and dreadful were the other attributes of God, did not mercy sweeten them! Mercy sets God's power on work to help us; it makes his justice become our friend; it shall avenge our quarrels.

*Position 5.* God's mercy is one of the most orient pearls of his crown: it makes his Godhead appear amiable and lovely: When Moses said to God, 'I beseech thee shew me thy glory;' the Lord answered him, 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will shew thee mercy,' Exod. xxxiii. 19. God's mercy is his glory; his holiness makes him illustrious; his mercy makes him propitious.

*Position 6.* Even the worst taste of God's mercy; such as fight against God's mercy, taste of it: the wicked have some crumbs from mercy's table; 'The Lord is good to all,' Psal. cxlv. 5. The sweet dew drops on the thistle, as well as the rose. The diocese where mercy visits is very large: Pharaoh's head was crowned though his heart was hardened.

*Position 7.* Mercy coming to us in a covenant is sweetest: it was mercy that God would give Israel rain, and bread to the full, and peace, and victory over their enemies, Lev. xxvi. 4, 5, 6. But it was a greater mercy that God would be their God, ver. 12. To have health is a mercy, but to have Christ and salvation is a greater mercy; this is like the diamond in the ring, it casts a more sparkling lustre.

*Position 8.* One act of mercy engageth God to another. Men argue thus, I have shewn you kindness already, therefore trouble me no more: but, because God hath shewn mercy, he is more ready still to shew mercy; his mercy in election makes him justify, adopt, glorify; one act of mercy engageth God to more. A parent's love to his child, makes him always giving.

*Position 9.* All the mercy in the creature is derived from God, and is but a drop of this ocean: the mercy and pity a mother hath to her child is from God; he that puts the milk in her breast, puts the compassion in her heart: therefore God is called 'The Father of mercies,' 2 Cor. i. 3. because he begets all the mercies in the world. If God hath put any kindness



into the creature, how much kindness is in him who is the Father of mercy?

*Position 10.* God's mercy, as it makes the saints happy, so it should make them humble. Mercy is not the fruit of our goodness: but the fruits of God's goodness. Mercy is an alms that God bestows; they have no cause to be proud, that live upon the alms of God's mercy, Job x. 15. 'If I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head:' all my righteousness is the effect of God's mercy, therefore I will be humble, and will not lift up my head.

*Position 11.* It is mercy stays the speedy execution of God's justice. Sinners continually provoke God, and make 'the fury come up in his face,' Ezek. xxxviii. 18. Whence is it God doth not presently arrest and condemn them? It is not that God cannot do it, for he is armed with omnipotence, but it is from God's mercy; mercy gets a reprieve for the sinner, and stops the speedy process of justice. God would, by his goodness, lead sinners to repentance.

*Position 12.* It is dreadful to have mercy witness against one: how sad was it with Haman, when the queen herself accused him? Esth. vii. 6. So, when this queen of mercy shall stand up against a person and accuse him, it is only mercy that saves a sinner. Now, how sad to have mercy become an enemy? if mercy be an accuser, who shall be our advocate? The sinner never escapes hell, when mercy draws up the indictment.

I might shew you several species or kinds of mercy; preventing mercy, sparing mercy, supplying mercy, guiding mercy, accepting mercy, healing mercy, quickening mercy, supporting mercy, forgiving mercy, correcting mercy, comforting mercy, delivering mercy, crowning mercy: but I shall speak of the qualifications or properties of God's mercy.

1. God's mercy is free. To set up merit is to destroy mercy: nothing can deserve mercy, because we are polluted in our blood; nor force it; we may force God to punish us, not to love us, Hos. xiv. 4. 'I will love them freely.' Every link in the chain of salvation, is wrought and interwoven with free grace. Election is free, Eph. i. 4. 'He hath chosen us in him, according to the good pleasure of his will.' Justification is free, Rom. iii. 24. 'Being justified freely by his grace.' Salvation is free, Titus iii. 5. 'According to his mercy he saved us.' Say not then, I am unworthy; for mercy is free: if God should shew mercy only to such as are worthy, he would shew none at all.

2. God's mercy is an overflowing mercy; it is infinite, Ps. lxxxvi. 5. 'Plenteous in mercy,' Eph. ii. 4. 'Rich in mercy,' Psal. li. 1. 'Multitude of mercies.' The vial of wrath doth but drop, but the fountain of mercy runs. The sun is not so full of light, as God is of mercy: God hath morning mercies, Lam.

ii. 24. 'His mercies are new every morning;' and night mercies, Psalm xlii. 8. 'In the night his song shall be with me.' God hath mercies under heaven, those we taste of; and in heaven, those we hope for.

3. God's mercy is eternal, Psal. ciii. 17. 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.' It is repeated twenty-six times in one Psalm, 'His mercy endureth for ever:' Psalm cxxxvi. The souls of the blessed shall be ever bathing themselves in this sweet and pleasant ocean of God's mercy. God's anger to his children lasts but a while, Psalm ciii. 9. 'But his mercy lasts for ever.' As long as he is God he will be shewing mercy; as his mercy is overflowing, so ever flowing.

*Use 1. Of Information.* It shews us how we are to look upon God in prayer, not in his judge's robes, but clothed with a rainbow, full of mercy and clemency; add wings to prayer, When Jesus Christ ascended up to heaven, that which made him go up thither with joy was, 'I go to my Father;' so that which should make our hearts ascend with joy in prayer, is, 'We are going to the Father of mercy, who sits upon the throne of grace;' go with confidence in this mercy; as when one goes to a fire, it is not doubtingly, perhaps it will warm ye, perhaps not.

*Use 2.* Believe in his mercy, Psalm lii. 8. 'I will trust in the mercy of God for ever.' God's mercy is a fountain opened, let down the bucket of faith, and you may drink of this fountain of salvation. What greater encouragement to believe than God's mercy? God counts it his glory to be scattering pardons; he is desirous that sinners should touch the golden sceptre of his mercy and live. And this willingness to shew mercy appears two ways:

1. By his entreating of sinners to come and lay hold on his mercy, Rev. xxii. 17. 'Whosoever will, come, and take the water of life freely.' Mercy woos sinners, it even kneels down to them. It were strange for a prince to intreat a condemned man to accept a pardon. God saith, Poor sinner, suffer me to love thee, be willing to let me save thee.

2. By his joyfulnefs when sinners do lay hold on his mercy. What is God the better whether we receive his mercy, or not? What is the fountain profited, that others drink of it? Yet, such is God's goodness, that he rejoiceth at the salvation of sinners, and is glad, when his mercy is accepted of. When the prodigal son came home, how glad was the father? and he makes a feast, to express his joy: this was but a type or emblem, to shew how God rejoiceth when a poor sinner comes in, and lays hold of his mercy. What an encouragement is here to believe in God? He is a God of pardons, Neh. ix. 17. Mercy pleaseth him, Mic. vii. 18. Nothing doth prejudice us but unbelief. Unbelief stops the current of God's mercy from

running; it shuts up God's bowels, closeth the orifice of Christ's wounds, that no healing virtue will come out, Mat. xiii. 58. 'He could do no mighty works there, because of their unbelief.' Why dost thou not believe in God's mercy? Is it thy sins discourage? God's mercy can pardon great sins, nay, because they are great, Psal. xxv. 11. The sea covers great rocks as well as lesser sands; some that had an hand in crucifying Christ, found mercy. As far as the heavens are above the earth, so far is God's mercy above our sins, Isa. lv. 9. What will tempt us to believe, if not the mercy of God.

*Use 3. Of caution.* Take heed of abusing this mercy of God. Suck not poison out of the sweet flower of God's mercy: do not think, that because God is merciful, you may go on in sin; this is to make mercy become your enemy. None might touch the ark but the priests, who by their office were more holy: none may touch this ark of God's mercy, but such as are resolved to be holy. To sin because mercy abounds, is the devil's logic. He that sins because of mercy, is like one that wounds his head, because he hath a plaister: he that sins because of God's mercy, shall have judgment without mercy. Mercy abused turns to fury, Deut. xxix. 19, 20. 'If he blefs himself, saying, I shall have peace though I walk after the imaginations of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, the Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy, shall smoke against that man.' Nothing sweeter than mercy, when it is improved; nothing fiercer, when it is abused; nothing colder than lead, when it is taken out of the mine: nothing more scalding than lead, when it is heated. Nothing blunter than iron, nothing sharper, when it is whetted, Psal. ciii. 17. 'The mercy of the Lord is upon them that fear him.' Mercy is not for them that sin and fear not, but for them that fear and sin not. God's mercy is an holy mercy; where it pardons, it heals.

*Q. What shall we do to be interested in God's mercy?*

*Ans. 1.* Be sensible of your wants. See how you stand in need of mercy, pardoning, saving mercy. See yourself orphans; Hos. xiv. 3. 'In thee the fatherless findeth mercy.' God bestows the alms of mercy only on such as are indigent. Be emptied of all opinion of self-worthiness. God pours the golden oil of mercy into empty vessels.

*2.* Go to God for mercy, Psal. li. i. 'Have mercy upon me, O God!' Put me not off with common mercy that reprobates may have; give me not only alcorns, but pearls; give me not only mercy to feed and clothe me, but mercy to save me; give me the cream of thy mercies: Lord! let me have mercy and loving-kindness, Psal. ciii. 1. 'Who crowned thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Give me such mercy as speaks thy electing love to my soul. O pray for mercy! God hath



treasures of mercy ; prayer is the key that opens these treasures ; and in prayer, be sure to carry Christ in your arms ; all the mercy comes through Christ ; 1 Sam. vii. 9. Samuel took a sucking lamb ; carry the Lamb Christ in your arms, go in his name, present his merits : say, Lord ! here is Christ's blood, which is the price of my pardon : Lord, shew me mercy, because Christ hath purchased it. Though God may refuse us when we come for mercy in our own name, yet not when we come in Christ's name : plead Christ's satisfaction, and this is such an argument as God cannot deny.

*Use 4.* It exhorts such as have found mercy, to three things :  
 1. To be upon *Gerizzim*, the mount of blessing and praising. They have not only heard the King of heaven is merciful, but they have found it so : the honey-comb of God's mercy hath dropt upon them ; when in wants, mercy supplied them ; when they were nigh unto death, mercy raised them from the sick-bed ; when covered with guilt, mercy pardoned them, Psal. ciii. 1. ' Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.' O how should the vessels of mercy run over with praise ! 1 Tim. i. 13. ' Who was before a persecutor, and injurious : but I obtained mercy.' I was bemiracled with mercy ; as the sea overflows and breaks down the banks, so the mercy of God did break down the banks of my sin, and mercy did sweetly flow into my soul. You that have been monuments of God's mercy, should be trumpets of praise ; you that have tasted the Lord is gracious, tell others what experiences you have had of God's mercy, that you may encourage them to seek to him for mercy, Psal. lxxvi. 16. ' I will tell you what God hath done for my soul ;' when I found my heart dead, God's Spirit did come upon me mightily, and the blowing of that wind made the withering flowers of my grace revive. O tell others of God's goodness, that you may set others a blessing him, and that you may make God's praises live when you are dead.

2. To love God. Mercy should be the attractive of love ; Psal. xviii. 1. ' I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.' The Hebrew word for love, signifies love out of the inward bowels. God's justice may make us fear him, his mercy may make us love him. If mercy will not produce love, what will ? We are to love God for giving us our food, much more for giving us grace ; for sparing mercy, much more for saving mercy. Sure that heart is made of marble, which the mercy of God will not dissolve in love. " I would hate my own soul, (saith St. Augustine) if I did not find it loving God."

3. To imitate God in shewing mercy. God is the Father of mercy ; shew yourselves to be his children, by being like him. St. Ambrose saith, The sum and definition of religion is, Be rich in works of mercy, be helpful to the bodies and souls of

others. Scatter your golden seeds; let the lamp of your profession be filled with the oil of charity. Be merciful in giving and forgiving. 'Be ye merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful.'

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## OF THE TRUTH OF GOD.

THE next attribute is God's truth; Deut. xxxii. 4. 'A God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he,' Psal. lvii. 10. 'For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.' A God of truth, Psal. lxxxvi. 15.—'Plenteous in truth.' God is the truth. He is true, 1. In a physical sense; true in his being: he hath a real subsistence, and gives a being to others. 2. He is true in a moral sense; he is true *sine errore*, without errors; *et sine fallacia*, without deceit. God is *Prima veritas*, the pattern and prototype of truth. There is nothing true but what is in God, or comes from God. I shall now speak of God's truth, as it is taken from his veracity in making good his promises, 1 Kings viii. 56. 'There hath not failed one word of all his good promise:' the promise is God's bond, God's truth is the seal set to his bond. This is the thing to be explicated and discussed, God's truth in fulfilling his promises.

There are two things to be observed in the promises of God to comfort us: 1. The power of God, whereby he is able to fulfil the promise. God hath promised to subdue our corruption, Mic. vii. 19. 'He will subdue our iniquities.' O! faith a believer, my corruption is so strong, that sure I shall never get the mastery of it: Thus Abraham looked at God's power, Rom. iv. 21. 'Being fully persuaded that what God had promised he was able to perform.' He believed, that that God, who could make a world, could make dry breasts give suck. 'This is faith's support, there is nothing too hard for God. He that could bring water out of a rock, is able to bring to pass his promises.

2. The truth of God in the promises: God's truth is the seal set to the promise, Tit. i. 2. 'In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised.' *Eternal life*, there is the sweetness of the promise: *God which cannot lie*, there is the certainty of it. *Mercy* makes the promise, *truth* fulfils it. God's providences are uncertain, but his promises are the 'sure mercies of David,' Acts xiii. 24. 'God is not a man that he should repent,' 1 Sam. xv. 29. The word of a prince cannot always be taken, but God's promise is inviolable. God's truth is one of the richest jewels of his crown, and he hath pawned this jewel in a promise, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 'Altho' my house be

not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.' [Although my *house be not so*] that is, though I fail much of that exact purity the Lord requires, yet he hath made with me an everlasting *covenant*, that he will pardon, adopt, and glorify me; and this covenant is ordered in all things and *sure*: 'The elements shall melt with fervent heat;' but this covenant abides firm and inviolable, being sealed with the truth of God: nay, God hath added to his word, his oath, Heb. vi. 17. wherein God pawns his being, life, righteousness to make good the promise. If, as oft as we break our vows with God, he should break promise with us, it would be very sad; but his truth is engaged in his promise, therefore it is like the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be altered. "We are not (saith Chrysostom) to believe our senses so much, as we are to believe the promises, &c." Our senses may fail us, but the promise cannot, being built upon the truth of God; God will not deceive the faith of his people, nay, he cannot; 'God, who cannot lie, hath promised:' he can as well part with his Deity, as his verity. God is said to be 'abundant in truth,' Exod. xxxiv. 6. What is that? *viz.* If God hath made a promise of mercy to his people, he will be so far from coming short of his word, that he will be better than his word; God often doth more than he hath said, never less. He is abundant in truth.

1. The Lord may sometimes delay a promise, but he will not deny: he may delay a promise: God's promise may lie a good while as seed under ground, but at last it will spring up into a crop. God promised to deliver Israel from the iron furnace, but this promise was above four hundred years in travail before it brought forth. Simeon had a promise that he should not depart hence, 'till he had seen the Lord's Christ.' Luke ii. 26 but it was a long time first, but a little before his death, that he did see Christ. But though God delay the promise, he will not deny. Having given his bond, in due time the money will be paid in.

2. God may change his promise, but he will not break his promise. Sometimes God doth change a temporal promise into a spiritual, Psal. lxxxv. 12. 'The Lord shall give that which is good:' perhaps this may not be fulfilled in a temporal sense, but a spiritual. God may let a Christian be cut short in temporals, but God makes it up in spirituals. If he doth not increase the basket and the store, he gives increase of faith, and inward peace: here he changeth his promise, but he doth not break it, he gives that which is better. If a man promiseth to pay me in farthings, and he pays me in a better coin, in gold, he doth not break his promise; Psal. lxxxix. 33. 'I will not suffer my faithfulness to fail;' In the Hebrew it is, to lie.



*Obj. 1. But how doth this consist with the truth of God? He saith, He will have all to be saved, 1 Tim. ii. 4. yet some perish.*

*Ans.* St. Austin understands it, not of every individual person, but some of all sorts shall be saved: as in the ark, God saved all the living creatures; not every bird or fish were saved, for many perished in the flood; but all, that is, some of every kind were saved; so God will have all to be saved, that is, some of all nations.

*Obj. It is said, Christ died for all; 'he is the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world,' John i. 29. how doth this consist with God's truth, when some are vessels of wrath, Rom. ix. 22.*

*Ans.* 1. We must distinguish of *world*. The world is taken either in a limited sense, for the world of the elect; or in a larger sense, for both elect and reprobates. 'Christ takes away the sins of the world,' that is, the world of the elect.

2. We must distinguish of Christ's dying for the world. Christ died sufficiently for all, not effectually. There is the value of Christ's blood and the virtue: Christ's blood hath value enough to redeem the whole world, but the virtue of it is applied only to such as believe: Christ's blood is meritorious for all, not efficacious. All are not saved, because some put away salvation from them, Acts xiii. 46. and vilify Christ's blood, counting it an unholy thing, Heb. x. 29.

*Use 1.* Here is a great pillar for our faith, the truth of God. Were not he a God of truth, how could we believe in him? our faith were fancy; but he is Truth itself, and not a word which he hath spoken shall fall to the ground. 'Truth is the object of trust.' The truth of God is an unmoveable rock, we may venture our salvation here, Isa. lix. 15. 'Truth faileth:' truth on earth doth, but not truth in heaven. God can as well cease to be God, as cease to be true. Hath God said, he 'will do good to the soul that seeks him,' Lam. iii. 25. He will 'give rest to the weary?' Mat. xi. 28. Here is a safe anchorhold, he will not alter the thing which is gone forth of his lips. The public faith of heaven is engaged for believers: can we have better security? The whole earth hangs upon the word of God's power, and shall not our faith hang upon the word of God's truth? where can we rest our faith but upon God's faithfulness? There is nothing else we can believe in, but the truth of God: we cannot trust in an arm of flesh, we cannot trust in our own hearts: this is to build upon the quick-sands; but the truth of God is a golden pillar for faith to stay upon: God cannot deny himself, 2 Tim. ii. 14. 'If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.' Not to believe God's veracity, is to affront God, 1 John v. 10. 'He that believeth not, hath

made God a liar.' A person of honour cannot be more affronted or provoked, than when he is not believed. He that denies God's truth, makes the promise no better than a forged deed; and can there be a greater affront offered to God?

*Use 2. Of terror to the wicked.* God is a God of truth, and he is true in his threatenings? the threatenings are a flying roll against sinners. God hath threatened to 'wound the hairy scalp of every one that goes on still in his trespasses,' Psal. lxxviii. 21. He hath threatened to judge adulterers, Heb. xiii. 3. To be avenged upon the malicious, Psal. x. 14. 'Thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thine own hand;' To 'rain fire and brimstone upon the sinner,' Psal. xi. 6. And God is as true in his threatenings as his promises: God hath oft, to shew his truth, executed his threatenings, and let his thunderbolts of judgment fall upon sinners in this life: he struck Herod in the act of his pride; he hath punished blasphemers: Olympius, an Arian bishop, reproached and blasphemed the blessed Trinity; immediately lightning fell down from heaven upon him, and consumed him. God is as true in his threatenings as in his promises: let us fear the threatening, that we may not feel it.

*Use 3. Is God a God of truth? let us be like God in truth.*  
 1. We must be true in our words. Pythagoras being asked what made men like God? answered, "When they speak truth." It is the note of a man that shall go to heaven, Pf. xv. 2. 'He speaketh the truth from his heart.' Truth in words is opposed, (1.) To lying, Eph. iv. 25, 'Putting away lying, speak every one truth to his neighbour.' Lying is when one speaks that for a truth, which he knows to be false. A liar is most opposite to the God of truth. There is (as Austin saith) two sorts of lies, 1. *An officious lie*, when a man tells a lie for his profit; as, when a tradesman saith his commodity cost him so much, when perhaps it did not cost him half so much: he that will lie in his trade, shall lie in hell. (2.) *A jesting lie*; when a man tells a lie in sport, to make others merry, he goes laughing to hell. When you tell a lie, you make yourselves like the devil, John viii. 44. 'The devil is a liar, and the father of it.' He deceived our first parents by a lie. Some are so wicked, that they will not only speak an untruth but will swear to it; nay, they will wish a curse upon themselves, if that untruth be not true. As I have read of a woman, one Anne Avaries, 1575. who being in a shop, wished that she might sink, if she had not paid for the wares she took; she fell down speechless immediately, and died in the place. A liar is not fit to live in a commonwealth. Lying takes away all society and converse with men; how can you converse with him, whom you cannot believe what he saith? Lying shuts men out of heaven, Rev. xxii. 25. 'Without are

dogs, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.' And it is a great sin to tell a lie, so it is a worse sin to teach a lie, Isa. ix. 15. 'The prophet that teacheth lies.' He who broacheth error, teacheth lies; he spreads the plague; he not only damns himself, but helps to damn others. (2.) Truth in words is opposed to dissembling. The heart and tongue should go together, as the dial goes exactly with the sun. To speak fair to one's face, and not to mean what one speaks, is no better than a lie: Ps. lv. 21. 'his words were smoother than oil, but war was in his heart.' Some have an art at this, they can flatter and hate. Hierom, speaking of the Arians, saith, "they pretended friendship, they kissed my hands, but plotted mischief against me." Ps. xxix. 5. 'A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth a net for his feet.' *Impia sub dulci melle venena latent*—"Falseness in friendship is a lie." Counterfeiting of friendship is worse than counterfeiting of money. This is contrary to God, who is a God of truth.

2. We must be true in our profession of religion. Let practice go along with profession; Eph. iv. 24. 'Righteousness and true holiness.' Hypocrisy in religion is a lie: the hypocrite is like a face in a glass, there is the shew of a face, but no true face: so he makes shew of holiness, but hath no truth of it; it is but the face in the glass. Ephraim pretended to be that which he was not; and what saith God of him? Hos. xi. 12. 'Ephraim compasseth me about with lies.' By a lie in our words we deny the truth; by a lie in our profession we disgrace it. Not to be what we profess to God, is telling a lie; and the scripture makes it little better than blasphemy, Rev. ii. 9. 'I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not.' O! I beseech you, labour in this to be like God, he is a God of truth: he can as well part with his Deity as his Verity: be, I say, like God, be true in your words, be true in your profession; God's children are children that will not lie, Isa. lxiii. 9. When God sees 'truth in the inward parts,' and 'lips which is no guile,' now he sees his own image in you: this draws God's heart towards you; likeness draws love.



## BUT ONE GOD.

Qu. V. THE fifth question is, *Are there more Gods than one?*

Ans. There is but one only, the living and true God.

THAT there is a God, hath been proved; and those that will not believe the verity of his essence, shall feel the severity of his wrath, Deut. vi. 4. 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God



is one Lord.' He is the 'only God,' Deut. iv. 30. 'Know therefore this day, and consider it in thy heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath there is none else.' Isa. xlv. 21. A just God and a Saviour; 'there is none beside me.' There are many titular gods: kings represent God: their regal sceptre is an emblem of his power and authority. Judges are called gods, Ps. lxxxii. 6. 'I have said, ye are gods,' viz. set in God's place to do justice; but dying gods, ver. 6. 'Ye shall die like men.' 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. 'They be that are called gods; but to us there is but one God.'

*Argument 1.* There is but one First Cause that hath its Being of itself, and on which all other beings depend. As in the heavens, the *primum mobile* moves all the other orbs, so God gives life and motion to every thing existent. There can be but one God, because there is but one First Cause.

2. There is but one infinite Being, therefore there is but one God. There cannot be two infinities, Jer. xxiii. 24. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth,' saith the Lord? If there be one infinite, filling all places at once, how can there be any room for another infinite to subsist?

2. There is but one Omnipotent Power. If there be two Omnipotents, then we must always suppose a contest between these two: that which one would do, the other power being equal, would oppose, and so all things would be brought into confusion. If a ship should have two pilots of equal power, one would be ever crossing the other: when one would sail, the other would cast anchor: here were a confusion and the ship must needs perish. The order and harmony in the world, the constant and uniform government of all things, is a clear argument that there is but one Omnipotent, one God that rules all, Isa. xlv. 6. 'I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God.'

*Use 1. Of information.* If there be but one God, then it excludes all other gods. Some have feigned that there were two gods; so the Valentinians: others, that there were many gods: so the Polytheites. The Persians worshipped the sun; the Egyptians the lion and Elephant; the Grecians worshipped Jupiter; these, I may say, 'err, not knowing the scriptures,' Mat. xxii. 29. Their faith is a fable. 'God hath given them up to strong delusions, to believe a lie, that they may be damned,' 2 Thess. ii. 11.

2. If there be but one God, then there can be but one true religion in the world, Eph. iv. 5. 'One Lord, one faith.' If there were many gods, then there might be many religions, every god would be worshipped in his way; but if there be but one God, there is but one religion; one Lord, one faith. Some say, we may be saved in any religion: it is absurd to imagine,

that God who is *One in essence*, should appoint several religions in which he will be worshipped. It is as dangerous to set up a false religion, as to set up a false god. There are many ways to hell: men go thither which way their fancy leads them; but there is but one direct road to heaven, viz. faith and holiness. There is no way to be saved but this: as there is but one God, so there is but one true religion.

3. If there be but one God, then you have but One that you need chiefly to study to please, and that is God. If there were divers gods, we should be hard put to it how to please them all; one would command one thing, another the quite contrary: and to please two contrary masters, is impossible: but there is but one God, therefore you have but One to please. As in a kingdom there is but one king, therefore every one seeks to ingratiate himself into his favour, Prov. xix. 6. so there is but one true God; therefore here lies our main work to please him. Be sure to please God, whoever else you displease. This was Enoch's wisdom, Heb. xi. 5. he had this testimony before he died, that 'he pleased God.'

*Qu. What doth this pleasing God imply?*

*Ans.* 1. We please God when we comport with his will. 'It was Christ's meat and drink to do his Father's will,' John iv. 34. and so he pleased him, Mat. iii. 17. 'A voice came from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' It is the will of God that we should be holy, 1 Thess. iv. 11. Now, when we are bespangled with holiness, our lives are walking bibles; this is according to God's will and it pleaseth him.

2. We please God, when we do the work that he sets us about, John xvii. 4. 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do,' viz. my mediatory work. Many finish their lives but do not finish their work. Our work God hath cut out for us, is to observe the first and second table. In the first, is set down our duty towards God; in the second our duty towards man. Such as make morality the chief and sole part of religion, set the second table above the first; nay, they take away the first table: for, if prudence, justice, temperance, be enough to save, then what needs the first table? and so our worship towards God shall be quite left out; but those two tables, which God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

3. We please God, when we dedicate our heart to give him the best of every thing. Abel gave God the fat of the offering, Gen. iv. 4. Domitian would not have his image carved in wood or iron, but in gold. Then we please God when we serve him with love, fervency, alacrity; we give him golden services: herein lies our wisdom and piety, to praise God. There is but

one God, therefore there is but One whom we have chiefly to please, namely, God.

4. If there be but one God, then we must pray to none but God. The Papists pray to saints and angels: 1. To saints: a Popish writer saith, “when we pray to the saints departed, they being touched with compassion, say the like to God for us, as the disciples did to Christ for the Canaanitish woman.” Mat. xv. 23 ‘Send her away, for she cryeth after us.’ The saints above know not our wants, Isa. lxiii. 16. ‘Abraham is ignorant of us;’ or, if they did, we have no warrant to pray to them. Prayer is a part of divine worship, which must be given only to God. 2. They pray to angels: angel worship is forbidden, Col. ii. 18, 19. and that we may not pray to angels, is clear from Rom. x. 14. ‘How shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed?’ We may not pray to any but whom we may believe in; but we may not believe in any angel, therefore, we may not pray to him. There is but one God. and it is a sin to invoke any but only God.

5. If there be but one God, who is ‘above all,’ Eph. iv. 6. then he must be loved all. 1. We must love him with a love of appretiation; set the highest estimate on him, who is the only fountain of being and bliss. 2. We must love him with a love of complacency: *amor est complacentia amantis is amato*, Aquin. Our love to other things must be more indifferent; some drops of love may run beside to the creature, but the full stream must run towards God: the creature may have the milk of our love, but we must keep the cream of our love for God: God who is above all, must be loved above all, Psal. lxxiii. 25. ‘There is none on earth whom I desire in comparison of thee.’

*Use 2. Of caution.* If there be but one God, then let us take heed of setting up more gods than one; Psal. xvi. 4. ‘Their sorrows shall be multiplied, that hasten after another god; their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.’ God is a jealous God, and he will not endure that we should have other gods: it is easy to commit idolatry with the creature: 1. Some made a God of pleasure, 2 Tim. iii. 4. ‘Lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God.’ Whatever we love more than God, we make a god. 2. Others make money their god: the covetous man worships the image of gold, therefore he is called an idolater, Eph. v. 5. That which a man trusts to, he makes his god: but he makes the wedge of gold his hope: he makes money his creator, redeemer and comforter: it is his creator; if he hath money, then he thinks he is made: it is his redeemer; if he be in danger, he trusts in his money to redeem him out: it is his comforter; if at any time he be sad, the golden harp drives away the evil spirit: so that money is his god. God made man of the dust of the earth; and man



makes a god of the dust of the earth. 3. Another makes a god of his child, sets his child in God's room, and so provokes God to take it away. If you lean too hard upon a glass, it will break; many break their children by leaning too hard upon them. 4. Others make a god of their belly, Phil. iii. 19. 'Whose god is their belly.' Clemens Alexandrinus writes of a fish that hath its heart in its belly; an emblem of Epicures, their heart is in their belly, they mind nothing but indulging the sensual appetite; they do, *sacrificara lari*; their belly is their god, and to this they pour drink-offerings; thus men make many gods. The apostle names the wicked man's trinity, 1 John ii. 16. 'The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life:' the lust of the flesh, pleasure; the lust of the eye, money; pride of life, honour: O take heed of this! whatever you deify besides God, will prove a bramble, and fire will come out of this bramble, and devour you, Judg. ix. 15.

*Use 3. Of reproof.* If the Lord Jehovah be the only true God, then it reproves those who renounce the true God; I mean, such as seek to familiar spirits: this is too much practised among them that call themselves Christians. It is a sin condemned by the law of God, Deut. xviii. 11. 'There shall not be found among you any that consults with familiar spirits.' How ordinary is this? If people have lost any of their goods, they send to wizards to know how they may come by their goods again. What is this but consulting with the devil? and so you renounce God and your baptism. What, because you have lost your goods, will you lose your souls too? 2 Kings i. 6. 'Thus saith the Lord, is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to enquire of Beelzebub?' So, is it not because you think there is not a God in heaven, that ye ask counsel of the devil? If any here be guilty, be deeply humbled, ye have renounced the true God; better be without the goods ye have lost, than have the devil help you to them again.

*Use 4. Of exhortation.* If there be but one God; as God is one, so let them that serve him be one. This is that Christ prayed so heartily for, John xvii. 21. 'That they all may be one,' Christians should be one, 1. In judgment; the apostle exhorts to be all of one mind, 1 Cor. i. 10. How sad is it to see religion wearing a coat of divers colours; to see Christians of so many opinions, and going so many different ways? It is Satan hath sown these tares of division, Mat. xiii. 39. He first divided men from God, and now divides one man from another. 2. One in affection. They should have one heart, Acts iv. 32. 'The multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul.' As in music, though there be several strings of a viol, yet all make one sweet harmony: so, though there are several Christians, yet there should be one sweet harmony of af-

fection among them. There is but one God, and they that serve him should be one. There is nothing would render the true religion more lovely, or make more profelytes to it, than to see the professors of it tied together with the heart-strings of love, Pf. cxxxiii. 1. 'Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is, to see brethren live together in unity!' It is as the sweet dew on Hermon, and the fragrant ointment poured on Aaron's head. If God be one, let all that profess him be of one mind, and one heart; this fulfils Christ's prayer 'that they all may be of one.'

2. If there be but one God, let us labour to clear the title, that this God is ours, Pf. xlvi. 14. 'This God is our God.' What comfort can it be to hear that there is a God, and that he is the only God, unless he be our God? What is Deity without property? O let us labour to clear the title. Beg the Holy Spirit: the Spirit works by faith; by faith we are one with Christ, and through Christ we come to have God for our God, and so all his glorious fulness is made over to us by a deed of gift.

*Use 5.* What cause have we to be thankful, that we have the knowledge of the only true God? How many are brought up in blindness? Some worship Mahomet; divers of the Indians worship the devil; they light a candle to him, that he should not hurt them. Such as know not the true God, must needs tumble into hell in the dark. O be thankful that we are born in such a climate where the light of the gospel hath shined! to have the knowledge of the true God, is more than if we had mines of gold, rocks of diamonds, islands of spices; especially if God hath savingly revealed himself to us; if he hath given us eyes to see the light; if we so know God, as to be known of him, as to love him, and believe in him, Matth. xi. 25. we can never be enough thankful to God, that he hath hid the knowledge of himself from the wise and prudent of the world, and hath revealed it unto us.



## OF THE TRINITY.

**Q. IV.** *HOW many persons are there in the Godhead?*

*Ans.* Three persons, yet but one God.

1 John v. 7. 'There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are but one.'

God is but one, yet there are three distinct persons subsisting in one Godhead. This is a sacred mystery, which the light within could never have discovered. As the two natures in

Christ, yet but one person, is a wonder, so three persons, yet but one Godhead. I am in a great deep, the Father God, the Son God, the Holy Ghost God; yet not three Gods, but one God. The three persons in the blessed Trinity are distinguished, but not divided; three substances, but one essence. This is a divine riddle, where one makes three, and three make but one. Our narrow thoughts can no more comprehend the Trinity in Unity, than a little nut-shell will hold all the water in the sea. Let me shadow it out by this similitude: in the body of the sun, there is the substance of the sun, the beams, and the heat; the beams are begotten of the sun, the heat proceeds both from the sun and the beams; but these three, though different are not divided; they all three make but one sun: so in the blessed Trinity, the Son is begotten of the Father, the Holy Ghost proceeds from both; yet though they are three distinct persons, yet but one God. First, let me speak of the Unity in Trinity; then of the Trinity in Unity.

1st, Of the Unity in Trinity. The Unity of the persons in the Godhead consists in two things:

1. The identity of essence. In the Trinity there is an oneness in essence: the three persons are of the same divine nature and substance; so that *in Deo non est magis et minus*, there are no degrees in the Godhead; one person is not God more than another.

2. The Unity of the persons in the Godhead, consists in the mutual in-being of them, or their being in one together. The three persons are so united, that one person is in another, and with another, John xvii. 21. 'Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.'

2dly, Let me speak of the Trinity in Unity. 1. The first person in the Trinity is God the Father: he is called the first person, in respect of *order*, not *dignity*; for God the Father hath no essential perfection which the other persons have not; he is not more wise, more holy, more powerful, than the other persons are, a priority, not a superiority.

2. The second person in the Trinity is Jesus Christ, who is begotten of the Father before all time, Prov. viii. 23, 24, 25. 'I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled; before the hills, was I brought forth.' Which scripture declares the eternal generation of the Son of God. This second person in the Trinity, who is Jehovah, is become our Jesus. The scripture calls him the branch of David, Jer. xxiii. 5. and I may call him the flower of the virgin, having assumed our nature. 'By him all that believe are justified,' Acts xiii. 39.



3. The third person in the Trinity, is the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son : his work is to illuminate the mind ; and inkindle sacred motions. The essence of the Spirit is in heaven, and every where ; but the influence of it is in the hearts of believers : This is that blessed Spirit, who gives us the holy unction, 1 John ii. 20. Though Christ merits grace for us, it is the Holy Ghost works it in us : Though Christ makes the purchase, it is the Holy Ghost makes the assurance, and seals us up to the day of redemption. Thus I have spoken of all the three persons : the Trinity of persons may be proved out of Mat. iii. 16. ‘ Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him ; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son.’ Here are three names given to the three persons. He who spake with a voice from heaven, was God the Father ; he who was baptized in Jordan, was God the Son ; he who descended in the likeness of a dove, was God the Holy Ghost. Thus I have shewn you the unity of essence, and the Trinity of persons.

*Use 1.* It confutes the Jews and the Turks, who believe only the first person in the Godhead : this cuts asunder the sinews of our comfort. Take away the distinction of the persons in the Trinity, and you overthrow man’s redemption, for God the Father being offended with man for sin, how shall he be pacified without a mediator ? This Mediator is Christ, he makes our peace ! And Christ having died, and shed his blood, how shall this blood be applied, but by the Holy Ghost ? Therefore, if there be not three persons in the Godhead, man’s salvation cannot be wrought out : if there be no second person in the Trinity, then there is no redeemer : if no third person, then there is no comforter. And so the plank is taken away by which we should get to heaven.

2. It confutes the execrable opinion of the Socinians, who deny the divinity of the Lord Jesus ; they make him only to be a creature of an higher rank. As the Papists blot out the second commandment, so the Socinians would the second part of the Trinity. If to oppose Christ’s members be such a sin, what is it to oppose Christ himself ? (1.) Jesus Christ is co-equal with God the Father, Phil. ii. 6. ‘ He thought it no robbery to be equal with God.’ (2.) He is co-eternal with God the Father, Prov. viii. 23. ‘ I was from the beginning ;’ for else there was a time when God was without a Son, and so he should be no Father ; nay, else there was a time when God was without his glory, for Christ is ‘ the brightness of his Father’s glory,’ Heb. i. 3. (3.) He is co-essential with God the Father. The Godhead subsists in Christ, Col. ii. 9. ‘ In whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.’ It is said, not only Christ was

with God before the beginning, but he was God, John i. 1. and 1 Tim. iii. 19. 'God manifest in the flesh.' The title of Lord, so often given to Christ, in the New Testament, doth answer to the title of Jehovah in the Old Testament, Deut. vi. 5. Mat. xxii. 37. so that Christ hath a co-eternity, and con-substantiality with his Father, John x. 30. 'I and my Father are one.' It were blasphemy for any angel to speak thus! Yet further, to prove Christ's Godhead, consider 1st, The glorious incommunicable attributes belonging to God the Father, are ascribed to Christ, 1. Is God the Father omnipotent? So is Jesus Christ. He is the Almighty, Rev. i. 8. he creates, Col. i. 16. 2. Is God the Father infinitely immense, filling all places? Jer. xxiii. 24. so is Jesus Christ. While Christ was on the earth by his bodily presence, he was at the same time in the bosom of the Father, John iii. 13. in regard of his divine presence. 2dly, The same *jura regalia*, or prerogatives royal, which belongs to God the Father, belong also to Christ: (1.) Doth God the Father seal pardons, this is a flower of Christ's crown, Mat. ix. 2. 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' Nor doth Christ only remit sin *organice*, as ministers do, by virtue of a power delegated to them from God: but Christ doth it by his own power and authority. (2.) Is God the Father the adequate object of faith? Is he to be believed in? So is his Son, John xiv. 1. (3.) Doth adoration belong to God the Father? So it doth to the Son, Heb. i. 6. 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' How sacrilegious therefore is the Socinian, who would rob Christ of the best flower of his crown, his Godhead? They that deny Christ to be God, must greatly wrest, or else deny the scripture to be the word of God.

2. It confutes the Arians, who deny the Holy Ghost to be God. The eternal Godhead subsists in the Holy Ghost, John xvi. 13. 'He shall guide you into all truth.' Christ speaks not there of an attribute, but of a person: and that the Godhead subsists in the person of the Holy Ghost, appears thus: the Spirit, who gives diversity of gifts, is said to be the same Lord, and the same God, 1 Cor. xii. 5, 6. The black and unpardonable sin is said, in a special manner, to be committed against the Godhead subsisting in the Holy Ghost, Matth. xii. 32. The mighty power of God is made manifest by the Holy Ghost; he changeth the hearts of men. The devil would have Christ prove himself to be God, by turning stones into bread: but thus the Holy Ghost shews his Godhead, by turning stones into flesh, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 'I will take away the stony heart: and give you a heart of flesh.' Yet further, the power and Godhead of the Holy Ghost appeared in the effecting the glorious conception of our Lord Jesus Christ; the very shadow of the Holy Ghost made a virgin conceive, Luke i. 35. The Holy

Ghost works miracles, which transcend the sphere of nature ; as raising the dead, Rom. viii. 11. To him belongs divine worship, our souls and bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. vi. 19, in which temples he is to be worshipped, ver. 20. We are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost ; therefore either we must believe his Godhead, or renounce our baptism in his name. Methinks, it were enough for such men, as have not so much as heard whether there be an Holy Ghost, Acts xix. 2. to deny his Deity ; but that any who go for Christians, should deny this article of their creed, seems to me very strange. They who would wittingly and willingly blot out the third person, shall have their names blotted out of the book of life.

*Use 2. Of exhortation.* 1st, Believe this doctrine, the Trinity of persons in the unity of essence. The Trinity is purely an object of faith : the plumb-line of reason is too short to fathom this mystery : but where reason cannot wade, their faith must swim. There are some truths in religion may be demonstrated by reason ; as that there is a God : But the Trinity of persons in the unity of essence is wholly supernatural, and must be believed by faith. This sacred doctrine, though it be not against reason, yet it is above reason. Those illuminated philosophers, that could find out the causes of things, and discourse of the magnitude and influence of the stars, the nature of minerals, could never, by their deepest search, find out the mystery of the Trinity : This is of divine revelation, and must be adored with humble believing. We can be no good Christians, without the firm belief of the Trinity. How can we pray to God the Father, but in the name of Christ, and through the help of the Spirit ? Believe the glorious Trinity. How are the Quakers to be abhorred, who go under the name of Christians, yet undervalue and renounce Jesus Christ. I have read of some of the Quakers, who speak thus ; “ We deny the person of him whom you call Christ, and affirm, That they who expect to be saved by that Christ without works, will be damned in that faith ? ” Could the devil himself speak worse blasphemy ? They would pull up all religion by the roots, and take away that corner-stone, on which the hope of our salvation is built.

*2dly,* If there be one God subsisting in three persons, then let us give, (1.) Equal reverence to all the persons in the Trinity. There is not more or less in the Trinity ; the Father is not more God than the Son and Holy Ghost. There is an order in the Godhead, but no degrees ; one person hath not a majority or supereminency above another, therefore we must give equal worship to all the Persons, John v. 23. ‘ That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.’ Adore unity in Trinity.

(4.) Obey all the Persons in the blessed Trinity ; for all of



them are God. 1. Obey God the Father; his words, either perceptive or minatory, must be observed. Christ himself, as man, obeyed God the Father, John iv. 34. much more then must we, Deut. xxviii. 10.

2. Obey God the Son, Psal. ii. 12. 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry?' Kiss him with a kiss of obedience: Christ's commands are not grievous, 1 John v. 3. Nothing he commands, but is for our interest and benefit: O then kiss the Son! Why do the elders throw down their crowns at the feet of Christ, and fall down before the Lamb? Rev. iv. 10, 11. but to testify their subjection, and to profess their readiness to serve and obey him.

3. Obey God the Holy Ghost. Our souls are breathed into us by the glorious Spirit, Job xxxiii. 4. 'The Spirit of God hath made me.' Our souls are adorned by the blessed Spirit; every grace is a divine sparkle lighted in the soul by the Holy Ghost. Nay more, the Spirit of God sanctified Christ's human nature: he united it with the divine, and fitted the man Christ to be our Mediator. Well then doth this third person in the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, deserve to be obeyed; he is God, and this tribute of homage and obedience is to be paid him by us.

## OF THE CREATION.

Q. VII. *WHAT are the decrees of God?*

*Ans.* The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatsoever shall come to pass.

I should now come to speak concerning the decrees of God, but I have already spoken something to this under the attribute of God's immutability. God is unchangeable in his essence, and he is unchangeable in his decrees; his counsel shall stand: he hath decreed the issue of all things, and carries them on to their period by his providence; and therefore I shall proceed to the execution of his decrees.

Q. VIII. The next question is, *What is the work of creation?*

*Ans.* It is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, &c.

Gen. i. 1. *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

The creation is glorious to behold, it is a pleasant and fruitful study. Some think that Isaac, when he went abroad into the fields to meditate, it was in the book of the creatures. The

creation is the heathen man's bible, the plowman's primer, the traveller's perspective-glass, through which he receives the species and representation of those infinite excellencies which are in God. The creation is a large volume, in which God's works are bound up; and this volume hath three great leaves in it, heaven, earth and sea.

The author of the creation is God, so it is in the text, 'God created.' The world was created in time, and could not be from eternity, as Aristotle thought. The world must have a maker, it could not make itself. If one should go into a far country, and see stately edifices there, he would never imagine that these could build themselves, but that there had been some artificer, there to raise such goodly structures, so this great fabric of the world could not create itself, it must have some builder and maker, and that is God; 'In the beginning God created.' To imagine that the work of the creation was not framed by the Lord Jehovah, is as if we should conceive a curious landscape to be drawn without the hand of a limner, Acts xvii. 24. 'God that made the world and all things therein.'

In the work of creation there are two things to be considered : I. The making. II. The adorning of it.

I. The making of the world. Here consider, 1. God made the world without any pre-existent matter. This is the difference between generation and creation. In generation there is *materia habilis et disposita*, some matter to work upon : but in creation there is no pre-existent matter. God brought all this glorious fabric of the world out of the womb of nothing. We see our beginning, it was of nothing. Some brag of their birth and ancestry; you see how little cause they have to boast, they came of nothing.

2. God made the world with a word. When Solomon was to build a temple, he needed many workmen, and they all had tools to work with, but God wrought without tools, Psal. xxxiii. 6. 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.' The disciples wondered that Christ could with a word calm the sea, Matth. viii. 26, 27. But it was more with a word to make the sea.

3. God made all things at first very good, Gen. i. 31. no defect nor deformity. The creation came out of God's hands a curious piece; it was a fair copy, without any blot, written with God's own fingers, Psal. viii. 3. So perfect was God's work.

II. The adorning of the world, first, God made this great lump and mass, *Rudis indigestaque moles*, and then beautified it, and put it into a dress. He divided the sea and the earth, he decked the earth with flowers, the trees with fruit : But what is beauty when it is masked over? Therefore, that we might

behold this glory, God made the light. The heavens were bespangled with the sun, moon, and stars, that so the world's beauty might be beheld and admired. God, in the creation, began with things less noble and excellent, vegetables, and sensitives; and then the rational creatures, angels and men. Man was the most exquisite piece in the creation: He is a microcosm, or little world. Man was made with deliberation and counsel, Gen. i. 26. 'Let us make man.' It is the manner of artificers to be more than ordinary accurate, when they are about their master-pieces. Man was to be a master-piece of this visible world, therefore God did consult about the making of so rare a piece. A solemn counsel of the sacred persons in the Trinity was called, 'Let us make man, and let us make him in our own image.' On the king's coin his image or effigies is stamp'd; so God stamp'd his image on man, and made him partake of many divine qualities.

I shall speak, 1. Of the parts of man's body: (1.) The Head, the most excellent architectonical part, it is the fountain of spirits, and the seat of reason. In nature the head is the best piece, but in grace the heart excels. (2.) The Eye, it is the beauty of the face; it shines and sparkles like a lesser sun in the body. The eye occasions much sin, and therefore well may it have tears in it. (3.) The Ear, which is the conduit-pipe through which knowledge is conveyed. Better lose our seeing than our hearing; for 'faith cometh by hearing,' Rom. x. 17. To have an ear open to God, is the best jewel on the ear. (4.) The Tongue. David calls the tongue his glory, Psal. xvi. 9. because it is an instrument to set forth the glory of God: the soul at first was a viol in tune to praise God, and the tongue did make the music. God hath given us two ears, but one tongue, to shew that we should be swift to hear, but slow to speak. God hath set a double fence before the tongue, the teeth and the lips, to teach us to be wary that we offend not with our tongue. (5.) The Heart, this is a noble part, and seat of life.

2. The Soul of man: This is the man of the man. Man, in regard of his soul, partakes with the angels; nay, as Plato saith, The understanding, will, and conscience are a glass that resemble the Trinity. The soul is the diamond in the ring, the soul is a vessel of honour; God himself is served in this vessel. It is a sparkle of celestial brightness, saith Damascene. If David did so admire the rare contexture and workmanship of his body, Psal. cxxxix. 14, 15. 'I am wonderfully made, I was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.' If the cabinet be so curiously wrought, what is the jewel? How richly is the soul embroidered? thus you see how glorious a work the creation is, and man especially, who is the epitome of the world.

Qu. *But why did God make the world?*



*Ans.* 1. *Negatively*: Not for himself: he did not need it, being infinite. He was happy before the world was, in reflecting upon his own sublime excellencies and perfections. 2. God did not make the world to be a place of mansion for us, we are not to abide here for ever. Heaven is the mansion-house, John xiv. 2. The world is only a passage-room to eternity; the world is to us as the wilderness was to Israel, not to rest in, but to travel thro' to the glorious Canaan. The world is a tiring-room to dress our souls in, not a place where we are to stay for ever. The apostle tells us of the world's funerals, 2 Pet. iii. 10. 'The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.'

2. *Positively*. God made the world to demonstrate his own glory. The world is a looking-glass, in which we may see the power and goodness of God shine forth; 'The heavens declare the glory of God,' Ps. xix. 1. The world is like a curious piece of arras or tapestry, in which we may see the skill and wisdom of him that made it.

*Use* 1. Did God create the world? This convinceth us of the truth of his Godhead: to create is proper to a deity, Acts xvii. 24. This convinced Plato of a Deity, when he saw all the world could not make a fly. Thus God proves himself to be the true God, and distinguisheth himself from idols, Jer. x. 11. It is written in Chaldee, 'Thus shall ye say to them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish.' Who but God can create? The creation is enough to convince the heathen that there is a God. There are two books out of which God will judge and condemn the heathen, viz. the book of Conscience, Rom. iii. 5. 'Who have the law written in their heart:' and the book of the Creation, Rom. ii. 20. 'The invisible things of him are clearly seen by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.' The world is full of emblems and hieroglyphics; every star in the sky, every bird that flies in the air, is a witness against the heathen. A creature could not make itself.

2. Here is a mighty support for faith, God creates. He that made all things with a word, what cannot he do? He can create strength in weakness; he can create a supply of our wants. What a foolish question was that, Ps. lxxviii. 19. 'Can he prepare a table in the wilderness?' Cannot he that made the world do much more? Ps. cxxiv. 8. 'Our help standeth in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.' Rest on this God for help, who made heaven and earth. The work of creation, as it is a monument of God's power, so it is a stay to faith. Is thy heart hard? he can with a word create softness. Is it unclean, he can create purity? Psal. li. 10. 'Create in me a clean heart, O God.' Is the church of God low,

he can create Jerusalem a praise, Isa. lxxv. 18. No such golden pillar for faith to stay upon, as a creating power.

3. Did God make this world full of beauty and glory, every thing very good? then, what an evil thing is sin, that hath put out of frame the whole creation? Sin hath much eclipsed the beauty, soured the sweetness, and marred the harmony of the world. How bitter is that gall, a drop whereof can embitter a whole sea? Sin hath brought vanity and vexation into the world, yea, a curse. 'God cursed the ground for man's sake,' Gen. iii. There were several fruits of the curse.

1. 'In sorrow thou shalt eat it,' verse 17. By that word Sorrow, is to be understood all the troubles and cares of this life. 2. 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,' ver. 19. In innocency Adam did till the ground, (he must not live idly) but it was rather a delight than a labour; that tilling was without toiling. 'The eating in sorrow, and the sweat of the brow, came in after sin. 3. 'Thorns and Thistles shall the ground bring forth,' verse 18.

*Q. Whether in innocency did not the earth bear thorns, because it is threatened as a punishment?*

*Ans.* It is likely it did bear thorns; for, when God had done creating, he made no new species or kinds of things: but the meaning is, Now, after sin the earth shall bring forth more plenty of thorns, and now those thorns should be hurtful, and choke the corn, which hurtful quality was not in them before. Ever since the fall, all the comforts of this life have a thorn and a thistle in them. 4. The fourth fruit of the curse was the driving man out of paradise, ver. 24. 'So he drove out the man.' God at first brought Adam into paradise, as into an house ready furnished, or as a king into his throne, Gen. i. 28. 'Have dominion over every living thing that moveth;' now God's driving Adam out of paradise, signified his dethroning and banishing him, that he might look after an heavenly and a better paradise. 5. A fifth fruit of the curse was death, ver. 19. 'To dust thou shalt return.' Death was not natural to Adam, it came in after sin. Josephus is of opinion, man should have died tho' he had a longer term of years added to his life; but out of question death grew out of the root of sin; the apostle saith, Rom. v. 12. 'By sin came death.' See then how cursed a thing sin is, that hath brought so many curses upon the creation. If we will not hate sin for its deformity, let us hate it for the curse it brings.

4. Did God make this glorious world? Did he make every thing good? Was there in the creature so much beauty and sweetness? Oh! then what sweetness is there in God? *Quicquid efficit tale illu est magis tale*; the cause is always more noble than the effect. Think with yourselves, is there so much ex-

cellency in house and lands? then how much more is there in God that made these? Is there beauty in a rose? what beauty then is there in Christ, the rose of Sharon? doth oil make the face shine? Ps. civ. 15. How will the light of God's countenance make it shine? Doth wine cheer the heart? O what virtue is there in the true vine! how doth the blood of this grape cheer the heart? Is the fruit of the garden sweet? how delicious are the fruits of the Spirit? Is a gold mine so precious? how precious is he who founded this mine? What is Christ, in whom are hid all treasures? Col. ii. 3. We should ascend from the creature to the Creator. If there be any comfort here below, how much more is there in God, who made all these things? How unreasonable is it, that we should delight in the world, and not much more in him that made it? How should our hearts be set on God, and how should we long to be with God, who hath infinitely more sweetness in him than any creature?

*Use 2. Of exhortation.* 1. Did God create the world? Let us wisely observe those works of creation? God hath given us not only the book of the scriptures to read in, but the book of the creation: look up to the heavens, they shew much of God's glory; the sun gilds the world with its bright beams: behold the stars, their regular motion in their orbs, their magnitude, their light, their influence. We may see God's glory blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars. Look into the sea, and see the wonders of God in the deep, Psal. cvii. 24. Look into the air, there the birds make melody, and sing forth the praises of their Creator. Look into the earth, there we may wonder at the nature of minerals, the power of the loadstone, the virtue of herbs; see the earth decked as a bride with flowers; all these are the glorious effects of God's power. God hath wrought the creation as with curious needle-work, that we may observe his wisdom and goodness, and give him the praise due to him, Psal. civ. 24. 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.'

2. Did God create all things? Let us obey our Maker. We are his *Jure Creationis*; we owe ourselves to him: If another gives us our maintenance, we think ourselves bound to serve him; much more should we serve and obey God who gives us our life, Acts xvii. 28. 'In him we live and move.' God hath made every thing for man's service, the corn for nourishment, the beasts for usefulness, the birds for music, that man should be for God's service. The rivers come from the sea, and they run into the sea again. All we have is from God; let us honour our Creator, and live to him that made us.

3. Did God make our bodies out of the dust, and that dust out of nothing? Let this keep down pride. When God would



humble Adam he useth this expression, 'Out of the dust wast thou taken,' Gen. iii. 16. Why art thou proud O dust and ashes? Thou art made out of coarse metal; *Cum sis humi, limus, cur non humilimus?* Ber. David saith, 'I was curiously wrought,' Pl. cxxxix. Thy being curiously wrought, may make thee thankful; but being made of the dust, may keep thee humble. If thou hast beauty, it is but well-coloured earth. Thy body is but air and dust mingled together, and this dust will drop into the dust. When the Lord had said of the judges, they were gods, Psal. lxxxii. 6. Lest they should grow proud, he tells them, they were dying gods, ver. 7. 'Ye shall die like men.'

4. Did God create our souls after his image, but we lost it? let us never leave it till we are restored to God's image again. We have now got the devil's image in pride, malice, envy, let us get God's image restored, which consists in knowledge and righteousness, Col. iii. 10. Grace is our best beauty, it makes us like God and angels: as the sun is to the world, so is holiness to the soul. Let us go to God to repair his image in us: Lord! thou hast once made me, make me anew, sin hath defaced thy image in me, O draw it again by the pencil of the Holy Ghost.



## THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

### Q. XI. *WHAT are God's works of providence?*

*Ans.* God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

The work of God's providence, John v. 27. 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' The great God hath rested from the works of creation, he doth not create any new species of things, Gen. i. 7. He rested from all his works: and therefore this scripture must needs be meant of God's works of providence, 'My Father worketh, and I work.' Psal. ciii. 19. 'His kingdom ruleth over all;' *i. e.* His providential kingdom. Now, for the clearing of this point, I shall,

1. Shew you that there is a providence. 2. What that providence is. 3. Lay down some maxims or propositions concerning the providence of God.

1<sup>st</sup>, That there is a providence: there is no such a thing as blind fate, but there is a providence that guides and governs in the world, Prov. xvi. 33. 'This lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.'

2<sup>dly</sup>, What this providence is? I answer, Providence is God's ordering all issues and events of things, after the counsel of his

will, to his own glory : 1. I call providence God's ordering of things, to distinguish it from his decrees : God's decree ordains things that shall fall out, God's providence ordereth them.

1. I call providence the ordering of things after the counsel of his own will.

3. God ordereth all events of things after the counsel of his will, to his own glory ; the glory of God being the ultimate end of all God's actings, and the centre where all the lines of providence do meet. The providence of God is *Regina mundi*, the queen and governess of the world : it is the eye that sees, and the hand that turns all the wheels in the universe. God is not like an artificer that builds a house, and then leaves it, and is gone ; but like a pilot, that does with a great deal of care, steer on the ship of the whole creation.

3dly, Positions about God's providence.

1. God's providence reaches to all places, persons and occurrences : 1. To all places, Jer. xxiii. 23. ' Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off ? ' The diocese where providence visits is very large ; it reaches to heaven, earth, and sea, Psal. cvii. 23, 24. ' They that go down to the sea, see the wonders of God in the deep. ' Now that the sea, which is higher than the earth, should not drown the earth, is a wonder of providence : and the prophet Jonah, he saw the wonders of God in the deep, when the very fish which did devour him and swallow him, did bring him safe to shore. 2. God's providence reaches to all persons, especially the persons of the godly, they are in a special manner taken notice of ; God takes care of every saint in particular, as if he had none else to take care for, 1 Pet. v. 7. ' He careth for you, ' *i. e.* Elect in a special manner. Psal. xxxiii. 18, 19. ' The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him ; to preserve them from death, and to keep them alive in famine. ' God, by his providential care, shields off dangers from his people, he sets a life-guard of angels about them, Psal. xxxiv. 7. God's providence keeps the very bones of the saints, Psal. xxxiv. 10. In bottles their tears, Psal. lvi. 8. It strengthens the saints in their weaknesses, Heb. xi. 34. It supplies all their wants out of its alm-basket, Psal. xxiii. 5. Thus providence doth wonderfully supply the wants of the elect. When the Protestants in Rochelle were besieged by the French king, God, by his providence, sent in a great number of small fishes that fed them, such as were never seen before in that haven. So the raven, that unnatural creature (that will hardly feed its own young, yet) providentially brought sustenance to the prophet Elijah, 1 Kings xvii. 6. The virgin Mary, though by bearing and bringing forth the Messiah, she helped to make the world rich, yet she herself was very poor ; and now, being warned of the angel to go into Egypt, Matth. ii. 13. the virgin had scarce

enough to bear her charges thither : see now how God provides for her before-hand ; he, by his providence, sends the wise men from the east, and they bring costly gifts, gold, myrrh, and frankincense, and present these to Christ : and now the virgin had enough to defray her charges into Egypt. God's children sometimes scarce know how they are fed, and yet providence feeds them, Psal. xxxvii. 3. ' Verily thou shalt be fed.' If God will give his people a kingdom when they die, he will not deny them dally bread while they live. 3. God's providence reaches to all affairs and occurrences in the world ; there is nothing that stirs in the world, but God hath, by his providence, the over-ruling of it. The raising of a man to honour, Psal. lxxv. 7. ' He puts down one, and raises up another.' Success and victory in battle is the result of providence : Saul had the victory, but God wrought the salvation, 1 Sam. xi. 13. That among all virgins that were brought before the king, that Esther should find favour in the eyes of the king, was not without God's special providence ; for, by this means, the Lord saved the Jews alive that were destinated to destruction. Providence reaches to the least of things, to the birds and pismires ; providence feeds the young raven, when the dam forsakes it, and will give it no food, Psal. cxlvii. 9. Providence reaches to the very hairs of our head, Mat. x. 30. ' The hairs of your head are all numbered ;' and surely if providence reaches to our hairs, then much more to our souls. And thus you have seen, that God's providence reaches to all places, to all persons, to all occurrences and affairs. Now there are two objections against this doctrine.

Obj. 1. *But some may say, There are many things done in the world which are excentrical, they are very disorderly and irregular ; and surely God's providence doth not reach these things.*

Ans. Yes, these things that seem to us irregular, God makes use of to his own glory. For instance : suppose you were in a smith's shop, and there should see several sorts of tools, some crooked, some bowed, others hooked, would you condemn all these things for nought, because they do not look handsome ? the smith makes use of them all for the doing of his work. Thus it is with the providences of God, they seem to us to be very crooked and strange, yet they all carry on God's work. I shall clear this to you in two particular cases :

1st, God's people are low ; why, this seems to be very much out of order, that these that are best, should be in the lowest condition : but there is much wisdom to be seen in this providence, as appears thus ; 1. Perhaps the hearts of the godly were lifted up with riches, or with success : now God comes with an humbling providence to afflict them and fleece them ; better is the loss that makes them humble, than the success that makes them



proud. Again, 2. If the godly were not sometimes afflicted, and suffered an eclipse in their outward comforts, how could their graces be seen, their faith and patience? If it were always sunshine, we should see no stars; if we should have always prosperity, it would be hard to see the actings of men's faith. Thus you see God's providences are wise and regular, though to us they seem very strange and crooked.

2dly, Here's another case, the wicked flourish; this seems to be very much out of order; ay, but God, in his providence, sees good sometimes that the worst of men should be exalted; they may do some work to God, though against their will, Isa. x. 7. God will be in no man's debt. God makes use of the wicked sometimes to protect and shield his church: he makes use of them to refine and purify his people, Hab. i. 12. 'Thou hast ordained them for correction.' As if the prophet had said, thou hast ordained the wicked to correct thy children. And indeed, as Austin saith well, "We are beholden to wicked men, who against their wills do us good." As the corn is beholden to the flail to thresh off its husks, or as the iron is beholden to the file to brighten it, so the godly are beholden to the wicked, though it be against their will, to brighten and refine their graces. Now, then if the wicked do God's own work, though against their will, God will not let them be losers by it; he will raise them in the world, exalt them, and wring out the waters of a full cup to them. Thus you see these providences are wise and regular, which to us seem strange and crooked.

Object. 2. *But, may some say, If God hath a hand in ordering all things that fall out, why then he hath a hand in the sins of men.*

I answer, no, by no means, he hath no hand in any man's sin. God cannot go contrary to his own nature, he cannot do any unholy action, no more than the sun can be said to be darkened. Here you must take heed of two things; as you must take heed of making God ignorant of men's sins, so you must take heed of making God to have a hand in men's sins: Is it a thing likely, that God is the author of sin, that is an avenger of it? Is it a likely thing that God should make a law against sin, and then have a hand in breaking his own law: is that likely? and therefore to answer the objection, God in his providence doth permit men's sins, Acts xiv. 16. 'He suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.' God permitted their sin, and he would never permit their sin, if he could not bring good out of it; as the apothecary can make a treacle of poison. Had not sin been at all permitted, God's justice in punishing sin, and his mercy in pardoning sin, had never been so well known. The Lord is pleased to permit it, but he had no hand in sin.

*Object.* But is it not said, that God hardened Pharaoh's heart? Here's more than God's bare permitting of sin.

*Ans.* God doth not infuse evil into men, only he withdraws the influence of his graces, and then the heart hardens of itself; even as the light being withdrawn, darkness presently follows in the air: but it were absurd to say, that therefore the light darkens the air; and therefore you will observe, that Pharaoh is said to harden his own heart, *Exod. viii. 15.* God is the cause of no man's sin; it is true God hath a hand in the action where sin is, but no hand in the sin of the action. He that plays upon a jarring instrument, but the jarring is from itself: so it is here, the actions of men, so far as they are natural, are from God; but so far as they are sinful, they are from men themselves, and God has no hand at all in them. And so much for the first position, that God's providence reaches to all places, to all persons, and to all occurrences.

2. A second position is this, there are providences that are casual and accidental to us that are pre-determined by the Lord: the falling of a tile upon one's head, the breaking out of a fire to us, is casual, but it is ordered by a providence of God. You have a clear instance of this, *1 Kings xxii. 34.* 'A certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the King of Israel between the joints of the harness.' This accident was casual as to the man that drew the bow; but it was divinely ordered by the providence of God; God's providence directed the arrow to hit the mark. Things that seem to fall out casual, and by chance, they are the issues of God's decrees, and the interpretation of his will.

3. God's providence is greatly to be observed, but we are not to make it the rule of our actions, *Psal. cvii. 43.* 'Whoso is wise will observe these things.' It is good to observe providence, but we must not make it our rule to walk by; providence is a Christian's diurnal, but not his bible. Sometimes a bad cause prevails and gets ground; it is not to be liked because it doth prevail: we must not think the better of what is sinful, because it is successful; here is no rule for our actions to be directed by.

4. Divine providence is irresistible, there is no standing in the way of God's providence to hinder it: when God's time was come for Joseph's release, the prison could hold him no longer. 'The king sent and loosed him,' *Psal. cv. 20.* When God would indulge the Jews with liberty in their religion, Cyrus by a providence, puts forth a proclamation to encourage the Jews to go and build their temple at Jerusalem, and worship God, *Ezra i. 2, 3.* If God will shield and protect Jeremiah's person in captivity, the very king of Babylon shall nurse up the prophet, give charge concerning him that he want nothing, *Jer. xxxix. 11, 12.*

5. God is to be trusted when his providences seem to run contrary to his promises. God promised David to give him the crown, to make him king; but providence runs contrary to his promise: David was pursued by Saul, was in danger of his life; but all this while it was David's duty to trust God. Pray observe, the Lord doth oftentimes by cross providence, bring to pass his promise. God promised Paul the lives of all that were with him in the ship; but now the providence of God seems to run quite contrary to his promise, the winds blew, the ship splits and breaks in pieces; and thus God fulfilled his promise; upon the broken pieces of the ship, they all came safe to shore. Trust God when providences seem to run quite contrary to promises.

6. The providences of God are chequer-work, they are intermingled; in the life to come, there shall be no more mixture; in hell there is nothing but bitter; in heaven there is nothing but sweet; but in this life the providences of God are mixed, there is something of the sweet in them, and something of the bitter. Providences are just like Israel's pillar of cloud, that conducted them in their march; it was dark on one side, and light on the other; so the providences of God are a dark part and a light part. In the ark there was laid up the rod and manna, so are God's providences to his children; there is something of the rod, and something of the manna; so that we may say with David, 'I will sing of mercy and judgment.' Joseph was in prison, there was the dark side of the cloud; but God was with Joseph, there was the light side of the cloud. Ather's shoes were of brass, but his feet were dipt in oil, Deut. xxxiii. 24. So affliction is the shoe of brass that pinches; ay, but there is mercy mingled with the affliction, there's the foot dipt in oil.

7. The very same action, as it comes from God's providence, may be good, which, as it comes from men, may be evil. For instance, Joseph being sold into Egypt, as he was sold by his brethren, it was evil, very wicked, for it was the fruit of their envy; but as it was an act of God's providence, so it was good, for by this means Jacob and all his family were preserved alive in Egypt. Another instance is in Shimei's cursing David: now, as Shimei cursed David, it was wicked and sinful, for it was the fruit of his malice; but as his cursing was ordered by God's providence, so it was an act of God's justice to punish David, and to humble him for his adultery and murder. The crucifying of Christ, as it came from the Jews, is an act of hatred and malice to Christ: so Judas' betraying him was an act of covetousness; but as it was an act of God's providence, so there was good in it, for, see it was an act of God's love in giving Christ to die for the world. Thus I have cleared to you



the doctrine of God's providence, in these several positions : let me now speak something by way of application.

*Use 1.* By way of exhortation in these particulars. (1.) Admire God's providence : the providence of God keeps the whole creation upon the wheels, or else it would soon be dissolved, and the very axle-tree would break in pieces : if God's providence should be withdrawn but for a while, creatures would be dissolved, and run into their first nothing. Without this wise providence of God, there would be anxiety and confusion in the whole world, just like an army when it is routed and scattered. The providence of God infuses comfort and virtue into every thing we enjoy ; our clothes would not warm us, our food would not nourish us, without the special providence of God. And doth not all this deserve your admiration of providence?

(2.) Learn quietly to submit to divine providence ; do not murmur at things that are ordered by divine wisdom. We may no more find fault with the works of providence, than we may with the works of creation : It is a sin as well to quarrel with God's providence, as to deny God's providence. If men do not act as we would have them, they shall act as God would have them. His providence is his master-wheel that turns these lesser wheels, and God will bring his glory out of all at last : Psal. xxxix. 9. ' I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou, Lord, didst it.' It may be, we think sometimes we could order things better if we had the government of the world in our hands : but, alas ! should we be left to our own choice, we should choose those things that are hurtful for us. David did earnestly desire the life of his child, which was the fruit of his sin ; now, had the child lived, it had been a perpetual monument of his shame. Let us be content God should rule the world, learn to acquiesce in his will, and submit to his providence : doth any affliction befall you ? Remember God sees it is that which is fit for you, or it should not come ; your clothes cannot be so fit for you, as your crosses. God's providence may sometimes be secret, but it is always wise ; though we may not be silent under God's dishonour, yet we should learn to be silent under his displeasure.

(3.) You that are Christians, believe that all God's providences shall conspire for the good at last. The providences of God are sometimes dark, and our eyes dim, and we can hardly tell what to make of them : but when we cannot unriddle providence, believe it shall work together for the good of the elect, Rom. viii. 28. The wheels in a watch seem to move cross one to another, but they help forward the motion of the watch, and make the larum strike : so the providences of God seem to be cross wheels ; but, for all that, they shall carry on the good of the elect. The pricking of a vein is in itself evil and hurtful ;

but as it prevents a fever, and tends to the health of the patient, so it is good : so affliction in itself is not joyous, but grievous : but the Lord turns this to the good of his saints. Poverty shall starve their sins, afflictions shall prepare them for a kingdom. Therefore, Christians, believe, that God loves us, that he will make the most cross providences to promote his glory and our good.

(4.) Let this be an antidote against immoderate fear ; for nothing comes to pass but what is ordained by God's decree, and ordered by his providence. We sometimes fear what the issue of things will be ; men grow high in their actions : let us not make things worse by our fear. Men are limited in their power, and shall not go one hair's-breadth further than God's providence will permit : he might let Sennacherib's army march towards Jerusalem, but he shall not shoot one arrow against it, Isa. xxxviii. 36. ' Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand.' When Israel was compassed in between Pharaoh and the red-sea, no question, some of their hearts did begin to tremble, and they looked upon themselves as dead men ; but providence so ordered it, that the sea was a safe passage to Israel, and a sepulchre to Pharaoh and all his host.

*Use 2.* Comfort in respect of the church of God : God's providence reacheth in a more special manner to his church, Isa. xxvii. 2. ' Sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine.' God waters this vineyard with his blessings, and watcheth over it by his providence, ' I the Lord, keep it night and day.' Such as think totally to ruin the church, must do it in a time when it is neither day nor night ; for the Lord keeps it by his providence night and day. What a miraculous conduct of providence had Israel ! God led them by a pillar of fire, gave them manna from heaven, set the rock abroach. God by his providence preserves his church in the midst of enemies ; which is as to see a spark kept alive in the ocean, or a flock of sheep among wolves. God saves his church strangely : 1. By giving unexpected mercies to his church, when she looked for nothing but ruin, Psal. cxxvi. 1. ' When the Lord turned the captivity of Sion, we were like them that dreamed.' How strangely did God raise up queen Esther to preserve alive the Jews, when Haman had got a bloody warrant signed for their execution ? 2. Strangely, by saving in that very way in which we think he will destroy : God works sometimes by contraries. He raiseth his church, by bringing it low. The blood of the martyrs hath watered the church, and made it more fruitful, Exod. i. 12. The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied : the church is like that plant Gregory Nazianzen speaks of, it lives by dying, and grows by cutting. 3. Strangely, in that he makes the enemy to do his work : when the people of Ammon and Moab, and

mount Sier came against Judah, God set the enemy one against another, 2 Chron. xx. 23. ‘The children of Ammon and Moab stood up against them of mount Sier to slay them; and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Sier, every one helped to destroy another.’ In the powder-treason he made the traitors to be their own betrayers: God can do his work by the enemy’s hand. God made the Egyptians send away the people of Israel laden with jewels, Exod. xii. 36. The church is the apple of God’s eye, and the eye-lid of his providence doth daily cover and defend it.

5. Let the merciful providence of God cause thankfulness: we are kept alive by a wonderful working providence. Providence makes our clothes warm us, our meat nourish us. We are fed every day out of the alms-basket of God’s providence, That we are in health; that we have an estate; it is not our diligence, but God’s providence, Deut. viii. 18. ‘Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for he it is that gives thee power to get wealth.’ Especially if we go a step higher, we may see cause of thankfulness: that we should be born and bred in a gospel climate; that we should live in such a place where the Sun of righteousness shines; this is a signal providence: why might we not have been born in such places where Paganism prevails? That Christ should make himself known to us, and touch our hearts with his Spirit, when he passeth by others: whence is this, but from the miraculous providence of God, which is the effect of his free grace?

Use 3. See here, that which may make us long for that time when the great mystery of God’s providence shall be fully unfolded to us. Now we scarce know what to make of God’s providence, therefore are ready to censure what we do not understand; but in heaven we shall see how all God’s providences (sickness, losses, sufferings) carried on our salvation. Here we see but some dark pieces of God’s providence, and it is impossible to judge of God’s works by pieces; but when we come to heaven, and see the full body and pourtaiture of God’s providence drawn out into its lively colours, it will be a glorious sight to behold: then we shall see how all God’s providences helped to fulfil his promises. Never a providence but we shall see had either a wonder or a mercy in it.

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## THE COVENANT OF WORKS.

Q. XII. I Proceed to the next question, *What special providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?*



*Ans.* When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge, upon pain of death.

For this, consult with Gen. ii. 16, 17. ‘ And the Lord commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat; for in the day thou eatest of it, thou shalt surely die.’ The subject then of our next discourse is, *the covenant of works*. This covenant was made with Adam and all mankind; for Adam was a public person, and the representative of the world.

*Q.* For what reason did God make a covenant with Adam and his posterity in innocency?

*Ans.* 1. To shew his sovereignty over us; we were his creatures, and as God was the great monarch of heaven and earth, God might impose upon us terms of a covenant. 2. God made a covenant with Adam, to bind him fast to God: as God bound himself to Adam, so Adam was bound to God by the covenant.

*Q.* What was the covenant?

*Ans.* God commanded Adam not to eat of the tree of knowledge; God gave Adam leave to eat of all the other trees of the garden. God did not envy him any happiness; only meddle not with this tree of knowledge, because God would try Adam’s obedience. As king Pharaoh made Joseph chief ruler of his kingdom, and gave him a ring off his finger, and a chain of gold, only he must not ‘ touch his throne,’ Gen. xli. 40. In like manner God dealt with Adam, he gave him a sparkling jewel, knowledge; and arrayed him with a fine vesture, put upon him the garment of original righteousness: only, saith God, touch not the tree of knowledge, for that is aspiring after omniscience. Adam had power to have kept this law; Adam had the copy of God’s law written in his heart. This covenant of works had a promise annexed to it, and a threatening. 1. The promise, ‘ Do this and live.’ In case man had stood, it is probable he had not died, but had been translated to a better paradise. 2. The threatening, ‘ Thou shalt die the death;’ Heb. ‘ In dying thou shalt die;’ that is, thou shalt die both a natural death, and an eternal, unless some other expedient be found out for thy restoration.

*Q.* But why did God give Adam this law, seeing God did foresee that Adam would transgress it?

*Ans.* 1. It was Adam’s fault that he did not keep the law; God gave him a stock of grace to trade with, but he of himself broke. 2. Though God foresaw Adam would transgress, yet that was not a sufficient reason that Adam should have no law given him: for, by the same reason, God should not have given his written word to men, to be a rule of faith and manners, be-

cause he foresaw that some would not believe, and others would be profane. Shall not laws be made in the land, because some break them? 3. God, though he foresaw Adam would break the law, he knew how to turn it to a greater good, in sending Christ. The first covenant being broken, he knew how to establish a second, and a better. Well, concerning the first covenant, consider these four things.

1. The form of the first covenant, in innocence, was working; 'do this and live.' Working was the ground and condition of our justification, Gal. iii. 12. Not but that working is required in the covenant of grace: we are bid to work out our salvation, and be rich in good works. But works in the covenant of grace are not required under the same notion, as in the first covenant with Adam. Works are not required to the justification of our persons, but as a testification of our love to God; not as a cause of our salvation, but as an evidence of our adoption. Works are required in the covenant of grace, not so much in our own strength, as in the strength of another: 'It is God which worketh in you,' Phil. ii. 13. As the scrivener guides the child's hand, and helps him to form his letters, so that is not so much the child's writing, as so much our working as the Spirit's co-working.

2. The covenant of works was very strict. God required of Adam and all mankind, 1. Perfect obedience. Adam must do all things written in the 'Book of the law,' Gal. iii. 10. and not fail, either in the matter or manner. Adam was to live up to the whole breadth of the moral law, and go exactly according to it, as a well made dial goes with the sun; a sinful thought had forfeited the covenant. 2. Personal obedience: Adam must not do his work by a proxy, or have any surety bound for him; no, it must be done in his own person. 3. Perpetual obedience: he must continue in all things written in the 'book of the law,' Gal. iii. 10. Thus it was very strict. There was no mercy in case of failure.

3. The covenant of works was not built upon a very firm basis: therefore it must needs leave men full of fears and doubts. The covenant of works rested upon the strength of men's inherent righteousness; which though in innocency was perfect, yet was subject to a change. Adam was created holy, but mutable: he had a power to stand, but not a power not to fall. Adam had a stock of original righteousness to begin the world with, but he was not sure he would not break. Adam was his own pilot, and could steer right in the time of innocency; but he was not so secured, but that he might dash against the rock of a temptation, and he and his posterity suffer shipwreck, so that the covenant of works must needs leave jealousies and doubt-

ings in Adam's heart, he having no security given him, that he should not fall from that glorious state.

4. The covenant of works being broken by sin; man's condition was very deplorable and desperate. He was left in himself helpless; there was no place for repentance; the justice of God being offended, sets all the other attributes against mankind. When Adam lost his righteousness, he lost his anchor of hope, and his crown: there was no way for man's relief, unless God would find out such a way, that neither man nor angel could devise.

*Use 1.* See the condescension of God, who was pleased to stoop so low, as to make a covenant with us. For the God of glory to make a covenant with dust and ashes; for God to bind himself to us, to give his life in case of obedience: entering into a covenant was a sign of God's friendship with us, and a royal act of his favour.

2. See what a glorious condition man was in, when God entered into a covenant with him. 1. He was placed in the garden of God, which for the pleasure of it was called paradise, Gen. ii. 8. He had his choice of all the trees (one only excepted) he had all kinds of precious stones, pure metals, rich cedars; he was a king upon the throne, and all the creation did obeisance to him, as in Joseph's dream, all his brethren's sheaves did bow to his sheaf. Man, in innocency, had all kinds of pleasure that might ravish his senses with delight, and be as baits to allure him to serve and worship his Maker. 2. Besides, he was full of holiness; paradise was not more adorned with fruit, than Adam's soul was with grace. He was the coin on which God had stamped his lively image; light sparkleth in his understanding, he was like an earthly angel; his will and affections were full of order, tuning harmoniously to the will of God. Adam was a perfect pattern of sanctity. 3. Adam had intimacy of communion with God, and conversed with him, as a favourite with his prince. Adam knew God's mind, and had his heart: he not only enjoyed the light of the sun in paradise, but the light of God's countenance. This condition was Adam in, when God entered into a covenant with him: but this did not long continue: 'man being in honour abideth not,' Psal. xlix. *ult.* lodged not for a night; his teeth watered at the apple, and ever since it hath made our eyes water.

3. Learn, from Adam's fall, how unable we are to stand in our own strength. If Adam, in the state of integrity, did not stand, how unable are we now, when the lock of our original righteousness is cut? If purified nature did not stand, how then shall corrupt nature? We need more strength to uphold us than our own.

4. See in what a sad condition all unbelievers and unpenitent



persons are ; so long as they continue in their sins, they continue under the curse of the first covenant. Faith intitles us to the mercy of the second covenant : but, while men are under the power of their sins, they are under the curse of the first covenant ; and if they die in this condition, they are damned to eternity.

5. See the wonderful goodness of God, who was pleased, when we had forfeited the first covenant, to enter into a new covenant with us. Well may it be called *fœdus gratiæ*, a covenant of grace ; it is bespangled with promises, as the heaven with stars. When the angels those glorious spirits fell, God did not enter into a new covenant with them to be their God, but let those golden vessels lie broken ; but hath entered into a second covenant with us, better than the first, Heb. viii. 6. It is better, because it is surer : it is made in Christ, and cannot be reversed ; Christ hath engaged his strength to keep every believer. In the first covenant we had a *posse stare*, a power of standing : in the second we had a *non posse cadere*, an impossibility of falling finally, 1 Pet. i. 5.

6. Whosoever they are that look for righteousness and salvation by the power of their free-will, or the inherent goodness of their nature, or by virtue of their merit, as the Socinians and Papists, these are all under the covenant of works : they do not submit to the righteousness of faith, therefore they are bound to keep the whole law, and in case of failure they are condemned. The covenant of grace, is like a court of chancery, to relieve the sinner, and help him who is cast by the first covenant : it saith, Believe in the Lord Jesus and be saved ; but such as will stand upon their own inherent righteousness, free-will and merit they fall under the first covenant of works, and are in a perishing estate.

*Use 2.* Let us labour by faith to get into the second covenant of grace, and then the curse of the first covenant is taken away by Christ. If we once get to be heirs of the covenant of grace, we are in a better state than before. Adam stood on his own legs, therefore fell ; we stand in the strength of Christ : under the first covenant, the justice of God, as an avenger of blood, pursues you ; but if you get into the second covenant, you are got into the city of refuge, you are safe, and the justice of God is pacified towards you.

## CONCERNING SIN.

Q. XIV. *WHAT is sin?*

*Ans.* Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.

1 John iii. 4. 'Sin is a transgression of the law.' Of sin in general.

1. Sin is a violation or transgression: the Latin word, *transgredior*, to transgress, signifies to go beyond one's bounds: the moral law is to keep us within the bounds of our duty; sin is a going beyond our bounds.

2. The law of God; it is not the law of an inferior prince that is broken, but of Jehovah, who gives laws as well to angels as men; it is a law that is just, and holy, and good, Rom. vii. 12. It is just, there is nothing in it unequal; holy, nothing in it impure: good, nothing in it prejudicial. So that there is no reason to break this law, no more than for a beast that is in a fat pasture, to break over the hedge, to leap into a barren heath or quagmire.

I shall shew what an heinous and execrable thing sin is. It is *malorum colluvies*, the complication of all evil; it is the spirits of mischief distilled: the scripture calls it 'the accursed thing,' Josh. vii. 13. it is compared to the venom of serpents, the stench of sepulchres. The apostle useth this expression of sin, 'Out of measure sinful,' Rom. vii. 13. or, as it is in the Greek, 'Hyperbolically sinful.' The devil would paint over sin with the vermilion colour of pleasure and profit, that he may make it look fair: but I shall pull off the paint from sin, that you may see the ugly face of it. We are apt to have slight thoughts of sin, and say to it, as Lot of Zoar, Gen. xix. 20. 'Is it not a little one?' But that you may see how great an evil sin is, consider these four things:

1. The original of sin, from whence it comes: it fetcheth its pedigree from hell; sin is of the devil, 1 John iii. 8. 'He that committeth sin is of the devil.' Satan was the first actor of sin, and the first tempter to sin: Sin is the devil's first-born.

II. Sin is evil in the nature of it.

1. It is a defiling thing. Sin is not only a defection, but a pollution. It is to the soul as rust is to gold, as a stain is to beauty. It makes the soul red with guilt, and black with filth. Sin in scripture is 'compared to a menstrous cloth,' Isa. xxx. 22. to a 'plague-sore,' 1 Kings viii. 38. Joshua's filthy garments, in which he stood before the angel, Zech. iii. 3. were nothing but a type and hieroglyphic of sin. Sin hath blotted

God's image, and stained the orient brightness of the soul. Sin makes God lothe a sinner, Zech. xi. 8. and when a sinner sees his sin, he lothes himself, Ezek. xx. 42. Sin drops poison on our holy things, it infects our prayers. The high priest was to make atonement for sin on the altar, Exod. xxix. 36. to typify that our holiest services need Christ to make an atonement for them. Duties of religion in themselves are good, but sin corrupts them, as the purest water is polluted, running through muddy ground. The leper under the law, if he had touched the altar, the altar had not cleansed him, but he had defiled the altar. The apostle calls sin, 'Filthiness of flesh and spirit,' 2 Cor. vii. 1. Sin stamps the devil's image on a man: malice is the devil's eye, hypocrisy his cloven foot. It turns a man into a devil, John vi. 70. 'Have not I chosen twelve, and one of you is a devil.'

2. Sin is a grieving of God's Spirit, Eph. iv. 30. 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.' To grieve, is more than to anger.

Q. *How can the Spirit be said to be grieved? For, seeing he is God, he cannot be subject to any passion.*

Ans. This is spoken metaphorically: Sin is said to grieve the Spirit, because it is an injury offered to the Spirit, and he takes it unkindly, and, as it were, lays it to heart. And, is it not much thus to grieve the Spirit? The Holy Ghost descended in the likeness of a dove; sin makes this blessed dove mourn. Were it only an angel, we should not grieve him, much less the Spirit of God: Is it not sad to grieve our comforter.

3. Sin is an act of contumacy against God; a walking antipodes to heaven, Lev. xxvi. 27. 'If ye will walk contrary to me.' A sinner tramples upon God's law, crosseth his will, doth all he can to affront, yea, to spite God. The Hebrew word for sin, *Pashang*, signifies rebellion: there is the heart of a rebel in every sin, Jer. xlv. 16. 'We will do whatsoever proceedeth out of our mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven.' Sin strikes at the very Deity; *Peccatum est deicidium*: Sin would not only unthrone God, but un-god him. If the sinner could help it, God would no longer be God.

4. Sin is an act of dissingenuity and unkindness: God feeds the sinner, keeps off evils from him, bewracles him with mercy; but the sinner not only forgets God's mercies, but abuseth them: he is the worse for mercy; like Absalom, who, as soon as David had kissed him, and taken him into favour, plotted treason against him, 2 Sam. xv. 10. Like the mule, who kicks the dam after she hath given it milk, *vas pertusum*, 2 Sam. xvi. 17. Is this thy kindness to thy friend? God may upbraid the sinner: I have given thee (may God say) thy health, strength, and estate; thou requitest me evil for good, thou woundest me with my



own mercies; is this thy kindness to thy friend? Did I give thee life to sin? Did I give thee wages to serve the devil?

5. Sin is a disease, Isa. i. 5. 'The whole head is sick;' some are sick of pride, others of lust, others of envy. Sin hath distempered the intellectual part, it is a leprosy in the head, it hath poisoned the vitals, Tit. ii. 16. 'Their conscience is defiled.' It is with a sinner as with a sick patient, his palate is distempered, the sweetest things taste bitter to him. The word which is 'sweeter than the honey-comb,' Isa. v. 20. tastes bitter to him, they put sweet for bitter. This is a disease, and nothing can cure this disease but the blood of the physician.

6. Sin is an irrational thing; it makes a man act not only wickedly, but foolishly. It is absurd and irrational to prefer the lesser before the greater, the pleasures of life, before the rivers of pleasures at God's right-hand for evermore. Is it not irrational to lose heaven, for the satisfying, or indulging of lust? As Lyfimachus, who, for a draught of water, lost a kingdom. Is it not irrational to gratify an enemy? In sin we do so. When lust or rash anger burns in the soul, Satan warms himself at this fire. Men's sins feast the devil.

7. Sin is a painful thing; it costs men much labour in pursuing their sins. How do men tire themselves in doing the devil's drudgery? Jer. ix. 5. 'They weary themselves to commit iniquity.' What pains did Judas take to bring about his treason? He goes to the high-priest, and then after to the band of soldiers, and then back again to the garden. St. Chrysostom saith, "Virtue is easier than vice." It is more pains to some to follow their sins, than to others to worship their God. While the sinner travels with his sin, in sorrow he brings forth; it is called 'serving divers lusts,' Tit. iii. 2. Not enjoy, but serve; Why so? because not only of the slavery in sin, but the hard labour; it is 'serving divers lusts.' Many a man goes to hell in the sweat of his brows.

8. Sin is the only thing God hath an antipathy against: God doth not hate a man because he is poor, or despised in the world; you do not hate your friend because he is sick, but that which draws forth the keenness of God's hatred, is sin, Jer. xlv. 4. 'O do not this abominable thing which I hate.' And sure, if the sinner dies under God's hatred, he cannot be admitted into the celestial mansions: will God let him live with him whom he hates? God will never lay a viper in his bosom. The feathers of the eagle will not mix with the feathers of the other fowls; God will not mix and incorporate with a sinner. Till sin be removed, there is no coming where God is.

III. See the evil of sin, in the price paid for it; it cost the blood of God to expiate it. 'O man (saith St. Austine) consider the greatness of thy sin, by the greatness of the price paid

for sin,' All the princes on earth, or angels in heaven, could not satisfy for sin; only Christ. Nay, Christ's active obedience was not enough to make atonement for sin, but he must suffer upon the cross; for, 'without blood is no remission,' Heb. ix. 22. O what an accursed thing is sin, that Christ should die for it! The evil of sin, is not so much seen in that one thousand are damned for it, as that Christ died for it.

IV. Sin is evil in the effects of it.

2. Sin hath degraded us of our honour. Reuben by incest lost his dignity; and though he were the first-born, he could not excel, Gen. xlix. 4. God made us in our own image, a little lower than the angels; but sin hath debased us. Before Adam sinned, he was like an herald that hath his coat of arms upon him: all reverence him, because he carries the king's coat of arms; but let this coat be pulled off, and he is despised, no man regards him. Sin hath done this, it hath plucked off our coat of innocency, and now it hath debased us, and turned our glory into shame, Dan. xi. 21. 'And there shall stand up a vile person.' This was spoken of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a king, and his name signifies illustrious; yet sin had degraded him, he was a vile person.

2. Sin disquiets the peace of the soul; whatever defiles, disturbs; as poison tortures the bowels, corrupts the blood, so sin doth the soul, Isa. lvii. 21. Sin breeds a trembling at the heart; it creates fears, and there is 'torment in fear,' 1 John iv. 18. Sin makes sad convulsions in the conscience. Judas was so terrified with guilt and horror, that he hangs himself to quiet his conscience. And is not he like to be well cured, that throws himself into hell for ease?

3. Sin produceth all temporal evil, Lam. i. 8. Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore she is removed. It is the Trojan-horse, it hath sword and famine, and pestilence in the belly of it. Sin is a coal, that not only blacks, but burns. Sin creates all our troubles; it puts gravel into our bread, wormwood in our cup. Sin rots the name, consumes the estate, buries relations. Sin shoots the flying roll of Gods curses into a family and kingdom, Zech. v. 4. It is reported of Phocas, having built a wall of mighty strength about his city, there was a voice heard, 'Sin is within the city, and that will throw down the wall.'

4. Sin unrepented of brings final damnation. The canker that breeds in the rose is the cause of its perishing; and corruptions that breeds in men's souls are the cause of their damning. Sin, without repentance, brings the 'second death,' Rev. xx. 14. that is *mors sine morte*, Bern. "a death always dying." Sin's pleasure will turn to sorrow at last; like the book the prophet did eat, Ezek. iii. 3. sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the

belly. Sin brings the wrath of God, and what buckets or engines can quench that fire; Mark ix. 44. 'Where the worm never dies, and the fire is not quenched.'

*Use 1.* See how deadly an evil sin is, how strange is it that any one should love it? Psalm iv. 3. 'How long will ye love vanity?' Hof. iii. 1. 'Who look to other gods and love flagons of wine.' Sin is a dish men cannot forbear, though it make them sick; who would pour rose-water into a kennel? What pity is it so sweet an affection as love should be poured upon so filthy a thing as sin? Sin brings a sting in the conscience, a curse in the estate; yet men love it. A sinner is the greatest self-denier; for his sin he will deny himself a part in heaven.

*Use 2.* Do any thing rather than sin. O hate sin! there is more evil in the least sin, than in the greatest bodily evils that can befall us. The Ermyn rather chooseth to die, than defile her beautiful skin. There is more evil in a drop of sin, than in a sea of affliction: affliction is but like a rent in a coat, sin a prick at the heart. In affliction there is *aliquie boni*, some good; in this lion there is some honey to be found, Psal. cxix. 71. 'It is good for me that I was afflicted.' *Utile est anima si in hac area mundi flagellis trituretur corpus*, Aug. "Affliction is God's flail to thresh off our husks; not to consume, but refine." There is no good in sin, it is the spirit and quintessence of evil. Sin is worse than hell; for the pains of hell only are a burden to the creature; but sin is a burden to God, Amos ii. 13. 'I am pressed under your iniquities, as a cart is pressed under the sheaves.'

*Use ult.* Is sin so great an evil? Then how thankful should ye be to God, if he hath taken away your sin? Zech. iii. 3. 'I have caused thy iniquity to pass from thee.' If you had a disease on your body, plague or dropy, how thankful would you be to have it taken away? Much more to have sin taken away. God takes away the guilt of sin by pardoning grace, and the power of sin by mortifying grace. O be thankful that this sickness is 'not unto death;' that God hath changed your nature, and by grafting you into Christ, made you partake of the sweetness of that olive; that sin, though it live, doth not reign, but the elder serves the younger, the elder of sin serves the younger of grace.

## ADAM'S SIN.

Q. XV. *WHAT was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?*

Ans. The sin was their eating the forbidden fruit.



Gen. iii. 6. 'She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband.

Here is implied, 1. That our first parents fell from their estate of innocency. 2. The sin by which they fell, eating the forbidden fruit.

(1.) Our first parents fell from their glorious state of innocency, Eccl. vii. 29. 'God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.' Adam was perfectly holy, he had rectitude of mind, and liberty of will to good; but his head ached till he had invented his own and our death, he sought out many inventions, 1. Adam's fall was voluntary; he had a *posse non peccare*, a power not to fall. Free-will was a sufficient shield to repel temptation: The devil could not have forced him, unless he had given his consent: Satan was only a suiter to woo, not a king to compel: but Adam gave away his own power and suffered himself to be decoyed into sin: like a young gallant, who at one throw, loseth a fair lordship. Adam had a fair lordship, he was lord of the world, Gen. i. 28. 'Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth.' But he lost all at one throw. As soon as he had sinned, he forfeited paradise. 2. Adam's fall was sudden, he did not long continue in his royal majesty.

Q. *How long did Adam continue in paradise before he fell?*

Ans. Tostatus saith, he fell the next day, Pererius saith, he fell the eight day after his creation. But the most probable and received opinion is, That Adam fell the very same day in which he was created: so Irenæus, Cyril, Epiphanius, and many others. The reasons which incline me to believe so, are,

1. It is said, Satan was a murderer 'from the beginning,' John viii. 44. Now, whom did he murder? Not the blessed angels, he could not reach them; nor the cursed angels, for they had before destroyed themselves. How then was Satan a murderer from the beginning? as soon as Satan fell, he began to tempt mankind to sin; this was a murdering temptation. By which it appears Adam did not stay long in paradise; soon after his creation the devil set upon him; and murdered him by his temptation.

2. Argument to prove that Adam fell the same day he was created: Adam had not yet eaten of the tree of life, Gen. iii. 22, 23. 'And now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat; the Lord sent him forth of the garden.' This tree of life being one of the choicest fruits in the garden, and being placed in the midst of paradise, it is very like Adam would have eaten of this tree of life one of the first, had not the serpent beguiled him with the tree of knowledge. So that hence I conclude, Adam fell the very day of his cre-

ation, because he had not yet tasted the tree of life, that tree that was most in his eye, and had such delicious fruit growing upon it.

3. Argument from Psal. xlix. 12. 'Man being in honour, abideth not.' The Rabbins read it thus 'Adam being in honour, lodged not one night.' The Hebrew word for *abide*, signifies, "To stay or lodge all night." Adam then, it seems, did not take up one night's lodging in Paradise.

1. *Inference.* From Adam's sudden fall, he fell the same day in which he was created, learn, 1. The weakness of human nature : Adam in a state of integrity, quickly made a defection from God, he soon lost the robe of innocency, and the glory of Paradise. And, was our nature thus weak when it was at the best? What is it now when it is at the worst? If Adam did not stand when he was perfectly righteous, how unable are we to stand, when sin hath cut the lock of our original righteousness? If purified nature did not stand, how then shall corrupt nature? If Adam, in a few hours, sinned himself out of Paradise, how quickly would we sin ourselves into hell, if we were not kept by a greater power than our own! but God puts underneath his everlasting arms, Deut. xxxii. 17.

2. From Adam's sudden fall, he fell the same day; learn how sad it is for a man to be left to himself. 1. Adam being left to himself, fell: O then, what will become of us, how soon fall, if God leave us to ourselves? A man without God's grace left to himself, is like a ship in a storm, without pilot or anchor, and is ready to dash upon every rock. Make this prayer to God, "Lord do not leave me to myself: If Adam fell so soon who had strength, how soon shall I fall who have no strength?" O urge God with his hand and seal, 2 Cor. xii. 9. 'My strength shall be made perfect in weakness.'

(2.) The sin by which our first parents fell was, 'eating the forbidden fruit;' where consider two things; 1. The occasion of it. 2. The sin itself.

1. The occasion of it; the serpent's temptation; the devil did creep into the serpent, and spake in the serpent, as the angel in Balaam's ass; where consider, 1. The subtilty of Satan's temptation; his wiles are worse than his darts. Satan's subtilty in tempting; 1. He deals all along as an impostor, he ushered in his tentation by a lie, Gen. iii. 4. 'Ye shall not surely die.' 2d. Lie, That God did envy our first parents their happiness, ver. 5. 'God knows, that in the day ye eat, your eyes shall be opened;' q. d. It is God's envying your felicity, that he forbids you this tree. 3d. Lie, That they should be thereby made like unto God, ver. 5. 'Ye shall be as gods.' Here was his subtilty in tempting: The devil was first a liar, then a murderer.

(2.) In that he set upon our first parents so quickly, before they were confirmed in their obedience; the angels in heaven are fully confirmed in holiness; they are called stars of the morning, Job xxxviii. 7. and they are fixed stars. But our first parents were not confirmed in their obedience, they were not fixed in their orb of holiness: though they had a possibility of standing, they had not an impossibility of falling; they were holy, but mutable; here was Satan's subtilty, in tempting our first parents before they were confirmed in their obedience.

(3.) His subtilty in tempting was, That he set upon Eve first; 1. because he thought she was less able to resist. Satan did break over the hedge, where it was weakest; he knew he could more easily insinuate and wind himself into her by a temptation. An expert soldier, when he is to storm or enter a castle, observes warily where there is a breach, or how he may enter with more facility; so did Satan the weaker vessel. 2. He tempted Eve first, because he knew, if once he would prevail with her, she would easily draw her husband. Thus the devil handed over a temptation to Job by his wife, Job ii. 9. 'Curse God and die.' Agrippina poisoned the emperor Commodus with wine in a perfumed cup; the cup being perfumed and given him by his wife, it was the less suspected. Satan knew a temptation coming to Adam from his wife, would be more prevailing, and would be less suspected: O bitter! sometimes relations prove temptations: a wife may be a snare, when she dissuades her husband from doing his duty, or enticeth him to evil. 'Ahab sold himself to work wickedness, whom his wife Jezebel stirred up,' 1 Kings xxi. 25. She blew the coals and made his sin flame out the more. Satan's subtilty was in tempting Adam by his wife, he thought she would draw him to sin.

(4.) Satan's subtilty in tempting, was in assaulting Eve's faith: he would persuade her that God had not spoken truth, 'Ye shall not surely die,' Gen. iii. 4. This was Satan's master-piece, to weaken her faith: when he had shaken that, and had wrought her once to distrust; then 'she yielded,' she presently put forth her hand to evil.

2dly, Satan's cruelty in tempting: as soon as Adam was invested in all his glory, the devil cruelly, as it were on the day of Adam's coronation, would dethrone him, and bring both him and all his posterity under a curse: we see how little love Satan hath to mankind; he hath an implacable antipathy against us, and antipathies can never be reconciled. So much for the occasion of Adam's sin, tempted by the serpent.

II. The sin itself, 'Eating the forbidden fruit.' This was very heinous, and that appears three ways; 1. In respect of the person that committed it. 2. The aggravation of the sin. 3. The dreadfulnes of the effect.

1st, Very heinous in respect of the person that committed it:



Adam had excellent and noble endowments; he was illuminated with knowledge, embellished with holiness; he knew his duty, and it was as easy to him to obey God's command, as to know it; he might have chosen whether he would sin or no, yet he wilfully did eat of the tree which he was forbidden.

2dly, The aggravation of Adam's sin.

Q. *Wherein did it appear to be so great? 'Twas but raptus pomi; was this such a great matter to pluck an apple?*

Ans. Besides that, it was against an infinite God; it was *malum complexum*, a voluminous sin, there were many sins twisted together in it; as Cicero saith of parricide, "He who is guilty of it, *Plurima committit peccata in uno*, he commits many sins in one;" so there were many sins in this one sin of Adam. A big bellied sin, a chain with many links. Ten sins in it.

1. Incredulity. Our first parents did not believe what God had spoken was truth. God said, They shall die the death, in the day they ate of that tree. They believed not that they should die; they could not be persuaded that such fair fruit had death at the door. Thus, by unbelief they made God a liar; nay, which was worse they believed the devil rather than God.

2. Unthankfulness, which is the epitome of all sin. Adam's sin was committed in the midst of Paradise: God had enriched him with a variety of mercies: he had stamped his own image upon him; he had made him lord of the world, gave him of all the trees of the garden to eat (one only excepted) and now to take of that tree! This was high ingratitude; this was like the dye to the wool, which made it crimson. When Adam's eyes were opened, and he saw what he had done, well he might be ashamed, and hide himself: to sin in the midst of Paradise, how could he look God in the face without blushing.

3. In Adam's sin was discontent: had he not been discontented, he would never have sought to have altered his condition. Adam, one would think, had enough, he differed but little from the angels, he had the robe of innocence to clothe him, and the glory of paradise to crown him; yet he was not content, he would have more; he would be above the ordinary rank of creatures. How wide was Adam's heart, that a whole world could not fill it!

4. Pride, in that he would be like God: this worm, that was but newly crept out of the dust, now aspires after a Deity; 'Ye shall be as gods,' saith Satan, and Adam hoped to have been so indeed; he supposed the tree of knowledge would have anointed his eyes, and made him omniscient. But, by climbing too high, he got a fall.

5. Disobedience: God said, 'Thou shalt not eat of the

tree,' he would eat of it, though it cost him his life. Disobedience is a sin against equity: it is equal we should serve him from whom we have our subsistence; God gave Adam his allowance, therefore it was but equal he should give God his allegiance: therefore disobedience was against equity. How could God endure to see his laws trampled on before his face? This made God place a flaming sword at the end of the garden.

6. Curiosity: to meddle with that which was out of his sphere, and did not belong to him. God smote the men of Bethshemesh but for looking into the ark, 1 Sam. vi. 19. Adam would be prying into God's secrets, and tasting what was forbidden.

7. Wantonness: though Adam had a choice of all the other trees, yet his palate grew wanton, and he must have this tree. Like Israel, God sent them manna, angels' food, ay, but they had an hankering after quails; it was not enough God did supply their wants, unless he should satisfy their lusts. Adam had not only for necessity, but for delight; yet his wanton palate lusted after forbidden fruit.

8. Sacrilege: the tree of knowledge was none of Adam's, yet he took of it, and did sacrilegiously rob God of his due. It was counted a great crime in Harpalus to rob the temple, and steal the silver vessels; so in Adam to steal fruit from that tree, which God hath peculiarly enclosed for himself. Sacrilege is double theft.

9. Murder: Adam was a public person, and all his posterity were involved and wrapped up in him; and he sinning, did at once destroy all his posterity, if free grace did not interpose. If Abel's blood did cry so loud in God's ears, Gen. iv. 10. 'The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground;' then how loud did the blood of all Adam's posterity cry against him for vengeance?

10. Presumption: Adam presumed of God's mercy; he blessed himself, saying, he should have peace: he thought, though he did transgress, he should not die; God would sooner reverse his decree, than punish him. High presumption, what an heinous sin then was Adam's breach of covenant.

*Use.* One sin may have many sins in it. We are apt to have slight thoughts of sin, it is but a little one. How many sins were in Adam's sin? O take heed of any sin! as in one volume there may be many works bound up, so there may be many sins in one sin.

*3dly.* The dreadfulneſs of the effect: it hath corrupted man's nature. How rank is that poison a drop whereof could poison a whole sea? And how deadly is that sin of Adam, that could poison all mankind, and bring a curse upon them, till it be taken away by him, who was made a curse for us.

## ORIGINAL SIN.

Q. XVI. *DID all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression.*

*Ans.* The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him, by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.

Rom. v. xii. 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;' &c.

Adam being a representative person, he standing, we stood; and he falling, we fell. We sinned in Adam; so it is in the text, 'In whom all have sinned.'

Adam was the head of mankind, and he being guilty, we are guilty, as the children of a traitor have their blood stained: *Omnes unus ille Adam fuerunt*, Aug. "All of us (saith Austin) sinned in Adam, because we were part of Adam."

Obj. *If, when Adam fell, all mankind fell with him; why then, when one angel fell, did not all fall?*

*Ans.* The case is not the same. The angels had no relation to one another; they are called morning-stars; the stars have no dependence one upon another: but it is otherwise with us, we are in Adam's loins; as a child is a branch of the parent, we were part of Adam; therefore, he sinning, we sinned.

Q. *How is Adam's sin made ours?*

*Ans.* 1. By imputation. The Pelagians of old held, that Adam's transgression is hurtful to posterity by imitation only, not by imputation. But the text confutes that 'in whom all have sinned.'

2. Adam's sin is ours by propagation. Not only is the guilt of Adam's sin imputed to us, but the pravity and corruption of his nature is derived to us, as poison is carried from the fountain to the cistern. This is that which we call original sin, Ps. li. 5. 'In sin did my mother conceive me.' Adam's leprosy cleaves to us, as Naaman's leprosy did cleave to Gehazi, 2 Kings v. 27. This original concupiscence is called,

1. The 'old man,' Eph. iv. 22. It is said to be the old man, not that it is weak, as old men are, but for its long standing, and of its deformity. In old age the fair blossoms of beauty fall; so original sin is the old man, because it hath withered our beauty, and made us deformed in God's eye.

2. Original concupiscence is called the law of sin, Rom. vii. 25. Original sin hath *vim coactivam*, the power of a law: a law binds the subject to allegiance. Men must needs do what sin will have them, when they have both the love of sin to draw



them, and the law of sin to force them. In original sin there is something privative, and something positive.

(1.) Something privative. *Carentia Justitiæ debitæ*, we have lost that excellent quintessential frame of soul which once we had. Sin hath cut the lock of original purity, where our strength lay.

(2.) Something positive. Original sin hath contaminated and defiled our virgin nature. It was death among the Romans to poison the springs. Original sin hath poisoned the spring of our nature, it hath turned beauty into leprosy; it hath turned the azure brightness of our souls into a midnight darkness.

Original sin hath become co-natural to us. A man by nature cannot but sin; though there were no devil to tempt, no bad examples to imitate, yet there is such an innate principle in him, that he cannot forbear sinning, 2 Pet. ii. 14. *A peccato cessare nesciunt*, who cannot cease to sin, as an horse that is lame cannot go without halting.—In the original sin is,

1. An aversion from good: man hath a desire to be happy, yet opposeth that which should promote his happiness; he hath a disgust of holiness, he hates to be reformed. Since we fell from God, we have no mind to return to him.

2. A propension to evil. If, as the Palagians say, there is so much goodness in us since the fall, then why is there not as much natural proneness to good, as there is to evil? Our own experience tells us, that the natural bias of the soul hath a tendency to that which is bad. The very heathens by the light of nature saw this; Hierocles the philosopher said, “it is grafted in us by nature to sin:” men roll sin as honey under their tongue—‘They drink iniquity as water,’ Job xv. 16. Like an hydropical person, that thirsts for drink, and is not satisfied: so they have a kind of drought on them, they thirst for sin. They sin, Eph. iv. 19. though they are tired out in committing sin, yet they sin, Jer. ix. 5. ‘They weary themselves to commit iniquity;’ as a man that follows his game while he is weary, yet he delights in it, and cannot leave off. Though God hath set so many flaming swords in the way to stop men in their sin, yet they go on in sin; which all shews what a strong appetite they have to the forbidden fruit.

That we may further see the nature of original sin, consider (1.) The universality of it; it hath, as a poison diffused itself into all the parts and powers of our soul, Isa. i. 5. ‘The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint.’ Like a sick patient, that hath no part sound, his liver swelled, his feet gangrened, his lungs perished; such infected, gangrened souls have we, till Christ (who hath made a medicine of his blood) do cure us.

1. Original sin hath depraved the intellectual part. As in the creation, ‘darkness was upon the face of the deep,’ Gen:

i. 2. So the understanding; darknefs is upon the face of this deep. As there is falt in every drop of fea, bitternefs in every branch of wormwood, fo there is fin in every faculty, the mind is darkened, we know little of God. Ever fince Adam did eat of the tree of knowledge, and his eyes were opened, we loft our eye-fight. Befides ignorance in the mind, there is error and miftake; we do not judge rightly of things, we put bitter for fweet, and fweet for bitter, Ifa. 20. Befides this, there is much pride, fuperciliousnefs and prejudice, many flefhly reasonings, Jer. iv. 14. ‘How long fhall vain thoughts lodge in thee?’

2. Original fin hath defiled the heart: the heart is *mortiferum, junius*, deadly wicked, Jer. xvii. 9. it is a leffer hell. In the heart are legions of lufts, obduratenefs, infidelity, hypocrify, finful eftuations; it boils as the fea with paffion and revenge. Madnefs is in their heart while they live, Eccl. ix. 3. The heart is *Officina diaboli*, the devil’s fhop or work-houfe, where all mifchief is framed.

3. The Will. Contumacy is the feat of rebellion: The finner croffeth God’s will, to fulfil his own, Jer. xlv. 17. ‘We will burn incenfe to the queen of heaven.’ There is a rooted enmity in the will againft holinefs; it is like an iron finew, it refuseth to bend to God. Where is then the freedom of the will? when it is fo full not only of indifpofition, but oppofition to what is fpiritual.

4. The affections. Thefe, as the ftrings of a viol, are out of tune. Thefe are the leffer wheels, which are ftrongly carried by the will, the mafter-wheel. Our affections are misplaced; fet on wrong objects. Our love is fet on fin, our joy on the creature. Our affections are naturally as a fick man’s appetite, he defires things which are noxious and hurtful for him; he calls for wine in a fever: So we have impure luftings, inftead of holy longings.

(2.) The adherency of original fin. It cleaves to us, as blacknefs to the fkin of the Ethiopian, we cannot get rid of it. Paul fhook off the viper on his hand, but we cannot fhake off this inbred corruption: It may be compared to a wild fig-tree growing on a wall, though the roots of it are pulled up, yet there are fome ftrings of it in the joints of the ftone-work, which will not be eradicated, but will fprout forth till the wall be pulled in pieces. Original concupifcence comes not as a lodger, for a night, but is an indweller, Rom. vii. 17. ‘Sin which dwelleth in me.’

It is a *malus genius*, an evil fpirit, that haunts us wherefoever we go, Jofh. vii. 12. ‘The Canaanite would dwell in the land.’

(3.) Original fin retards and hinders us in the exercifes of God’s worfhip. Whence is all that dulnefs and deadnefs in re-

ligion? It is the fruit of original sin : It is this rocks us asleep in duty, Rom. vii. 19. 'The good that I would, I do not.' Sin is compared to a weight, Heb. xiii. 1. A man that hath weights tied to his legs, cannot run so fast; It is like that fish Pliny speaks of, a sea-lamprey, that cleaves to the keel of a ship, and hinders its progress when it is under sail.

(4.) Original sin, though it lies latent in the soul, and be as a spring which runs under ground, yet oft it breaks forth unexpectedly. Christian, thou canst not believe that evil which is in thy heart, and which will break forth suddenly, if God leave thee, 2 Kings viii. 13, 15. 'Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?' Hazael could not believe he had such a root of bitterness in his heart, that he should rip up the women with child : 'Is thy servant a dog?' Yes, and worse than a dog, when that original corruption within was stirred up. If one had come to Peter, and said, Peter, within a few hours thou wilt deny Christ; he would have said, 'Is thy servant a dog?' But alas! Peter did not know his own heart, nor how far that corruption within would prevail upon him. The sea may be calm, and look clear; but when the wind blows, how doth it rage and foam? so though now thy heart seems good, yet, when temptation blows, how may original sin discover itself, making the foam with lust and passion. Who would have thought to have found adultery in David, and drunkenness in Noah, and cursing in Job? If God leave a man to himself, how suddenly and scandalously may original sin break forth in the holiest men alive?

(5.) Original sin doth mix and incorporate itself with our duties and graces.

1. With our duties. As the hand which is paralytical or palsy, cannot move without shaking, as wanting some inward strength; so we cannot do an holy action without sinning, as wanting a principle of original righteousness. As the leper, whatever he touched became unclean: if he touched the altar, the altar did not sanctify him, but he polluted the altar; such a leprosy is original sin, it defiles our prayers and tears; we cannot write without blotting. Though I do not say, that the holy duties and good works of the regenerate are sins, for that were to reproach the Spirit of Christ, by which they are wrought; yet this I say, that the best works of the godly have sin cleaving to them; only Christ's blood makes atonement for our holy things.

2. With our graces. There is some unbelief mixed with faith, lukewarmness with zeal, pride with humility. As bad lungs cause an asthma, or shortness of breath, so original corruption, having infected our heart, our graces breathe now very faintly.



(6.) Original sin is a vigorous active principle within us ; it doth not lie still, but is ever exciting and stirring us up to evil ; it is an inmate, very unquiet ; Rom. vii. 15. ‘ What I hate, that do I.’ How came Paul to do so ? Original sin did irritate and stir him up to it. Original sin is like quick-silver, always in motion ; when we are asleep, sin is awake in the fancy. Original sin sets the head a plotting evil, and the hands a working it : it hath in it *principium motus*, not *quietis* ; it is like the pulse ever-beating.

(7.) Original sin is the cause of all actual ; it is *fomes peccati*, it is the womb in which all actual sins are conceived. Hence come murders, adulteries, rapines ; it is the Trojan horse, out of which a whole army of impieties come. Though actual sins may be more scandalous, yet original sin is more heinous ; the cause is more than the effect.

(8.) It is not perfectly cured in this life. Grace, though it doth subdue sin, yet doth not wholly remove it. Though we are like Christ, having the first fruits of the Spirit, yet we are unlike him, having the remainders of the flesh. There are two nations in the womb. Original sin is like that tree, Dan. iv. 23. though the branches of it were hewn down, and the main body of it, yet the stumps and root of the tree were left : Though the Spirit be still weakening and hewing down sin in the godly, yet the stump of original sin is still left : It is a sea that will not, in this life, be dried up.

Q. *But why doth God leave original corruption in us after regeneration ? He could quite free us from it, if he pleased.*

Ans. He doth it, to shew the power of his grace in the weakest believer. Grace shall prevail against a torrent of corruption. Whence is this ? the corruption is ours, but the grace is God’s.

2. God leaves original corruption, to make us long after heaven ; when there shall be no sin to defile, no devil to tempt. When Elias was taken up to heaven, his mantle dropped off ; so, when the angels shall carry us up to heaven, this mantle of sin shall drop off : We shall never more complain of an aching head, or an unbelieving heart.

Use. 1. If original sin be propogated to us, and will be inherent in us while we live here, then it confutes the Libertines and Quakers, who say they are without sin ; they hold perfection ; they shew much pride and ignorance ; but we see the seeds of original sin remain in the best, Eccl. vii. 20. ‘ There is not a just man lives, and sins not.’ And St. Paul complained of a ‘ body of death,’ Rom. vii. 24. Grace, though it doth purify nature, it doth not perfect it.

Object. *But doth not the apostle say of believers, that their*

‘old man is crucified,’ Rom. vi. 6. and they are ‘dead to sin?’ Rom. vii. 11.

*Ans.* They are dead, 1. Spiritually. They are dead as to the *reatus*, the guilt of it; and as to the *regnum*, the power of it; the love of sin is crucified.

2. They are dead to sin legally. As a man that is sentenced to death is dead in law, so they are legally dead to sin; there is a sentence of death gone out against sin, it shall die and drop into the grave: But at the present, sin hath its life lengthened out; nothing but the death of the body can quite free us from the body of death.

*Use* 2. Let us lay to heart original sin, and be deeply humbled for it; it cleaves to us as a disease, it is an active principle in us, stirring us up to evil. Original sin is worse than all actual sin; the fountain is more than the stream. Some think, as long as they are civil, they are well enough; ay, but thy nature is poisoned: A river may have fair streams, but vermin at bottom. Thou carriest an hell about thee, thou canst do nothing but thou defilest it; thy heart, like muddy ground, defiles the purest water that runs through it. Nay, though thou art regenerate, there is much of the old man in the new man. O how should original sin humble us! This is one reason God hath left original sin in us, because he would have it as a thorn in our side to humble us. As the bishop of Alexandria, after the people had embraced Christianity, destroyed all their idols but one, that the sight of that idol might make them lothe themselves for their former idolatry; so God leaves original sin to pull down the plumes of pride. Under our silver wings of grace are black feet.

2. Let the sense of this make us daily look up to heaven for help; beg Christ’s blood to wash away the guilt of sin, and his Spirit to mortify the power of it; beg further degrees of grace; *gratiam Christi eo obnoxious ambiamus*. Though grace cannot make sin not to be, yet not to reign; though grace cannot expel sin, it can repel it: And for our comfort, where grace makes a combat with sin, death shall make a conquest.

3. Let original sin make us walk with continual jealousy and watchfulness over our hearts. The sin of our nature is like a sleeping lion, the least thing that awakens it makes it rage. The sin of our nature, though it seems quiet, and lies as fire hid under the embers, yet if it be a little stirred and blown up by a temptation, how quickly may it flame forth into scandalous evils? Therefore we had need always to walk watchfully, Mark xiii. 37. ‘I say to you all, Watch.’ A wandering heart needs a watchful eye.

## MAN'S MISERY BY THE FALL.

Q. XIX. *WHAT is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?*

*Ans.* All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

Eph. ii. 3. 'And were by nature children of wrath.' Adam left an unhappy portion to his posterity, *Sin* and *Misery*. We have already considered the first of these, original sin, now the misery of that estate; in the first, we have seen mankind offending, in the second, we shall see him suffering. The misery ensuing original sin is two-fold.

*Privative.* By this first hereditary sin we have lost communion with God. Adam was God's familiar, his favourite; but sin hath put us all out of favour: when we lost God's image, we lost his acquaintance. God's banishing Adam out of paradise, hieroglyphically, it shewed how sin hath banished us out of God's love and favour.

II. *Positive.* In four things. 1. Under the power of Satan. 2. Heirs of God's wrath. 3. Subject to all miseries in this life. 4. Obnoxious to hell and damnation.

Ist. The first misery is, By nature we are 'under the power of Satan,' who is called, 'The prince of the power of the air,' Eph. ii. 2. Before the fall man was a free denison, now a slave; before a king on the throne, now in fetters. And who is man enslaved to? To one that is an hater of him. This was an aggravation of Israel's servitude, Psal. cvi. 41. 'They that hated them ruled over them.' By sin we are enslaved to Satan, who is an hater of mankind, and writes all his laws in blood. Sinners before conversion are under Satan's command, as the ass at the command of the driver, he doth all the devil's drudgery. No sooner Satan tempts, but he obeys: as the ship is at the command of the pilot, he steers it which way he will, so is the sinner at the command of Satan, he may steer him which way he will; and he never steers the ship but into hell's mouth. The devil rules all the powers and faculties of a sinner.

1. He rules the understanding: he blinds men with ignorance, and then rules them; as the Philistines first put out Samson's eyes, and then bound him. Satan can do what he will with an ignorant man: he doth not see the error of his way, therefore the devil can lead him into any sin; you may lead a blind man any whither: *Omne peccatum funditur in ignorantia*.

2. Satan rules the will: though he cannot force the will, yet



he can, by temptation, draw it, John viii. 44. 'The lusts of your father ye will do.' He hath got your hearts, and him ye will obey, Jer. xlv. 17. 'We will burn incense to the queen of heaven.' When the devil spurs a sinner by a temptation, he will over hedge and ditch, break all God's laws, that he may obey Satan: Where then is free-will? When Satan hath such power over the will, 'his lusts ye will do.' There's not any member of the body but is at the devil's service: the head to plot sin, the hands to work it, the feet to run the devil's errand. *Grave jugum servitutis*, Cicero. Slavery is hateful to a noble spirit. Satan is the worst tyrant; the cruelty of Canibal, or Nero, is nothing to his. Other tyrants do but rule over the bodies, he over the conscience: other tyrants have some pity on their slaves, though they work in the galley, they give them meat, let them have hours for rest; but Satan is a merciless tyrant, he lets them have no rest. What pains did Judas take? The devil would let him have no rest till he had betrayed Christ, and afterwards imbrued his hands in his own blood.

*Use 1.* See here our misery by original sin, enslaved to Satan, Eph. ii. 2. Satan is said to work effectually in the children of disobedience. What a sad plague is this for a sinner to be at the will of the devil? Just like a slave, if the Turks bid him dig in the mines, hew in the quarries, tug at the oar, the slave must do it, he dares not refuse. If the devil bids a man lie or cozen, he doth not refuse; and, which is worse, men are enslaved, and they willingly obey this tyrant: other slaves are forced against their will: 'Israel sighed by reason of their bondage,' Exod. ii. 23. But sinners are willing to be slaves, they will not take their freedom; they kiss their fetters.

*Use 2.* Let us labour to get out of this deplorable condition sin hath plunged us into; get from under the power of Satan: if any of your children were slaves, you would give great sums of money to purchase their freedom: your souls are enslaved, and will you not labour to be set free? Improve the gospel; the gospel proclaims a jubilee to captives: sin binds men, the gospel looseth them, Paul's preaching was 'to turn men from the power of Satan to God.' Acts xxvi. 18. The gospel-star leads you to Christ; and if you get Christ, than you are made free, though not from the being of sin, yet from Satan's tyranny, John viii. 36. 'If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' You hope to be kings to reign in heaven, and will you let Satan reign in you now? never think to be kings when you die, and slaves while you live: the crown of glory is for conquerors, not captives. Oh! get out of Satan's jurisdiction; get your fetters of sin filed off by repentance.

2d, *Misery*. [*We are heirs of God's wrath.*] In the text, and were by nature the children of wrath. Tertullian's exposition

here is wrong, *children of wrath*, he understands subjective, that is, subject to wrath and passion; offending often in the irascible faculty of a wrathful spirit. But, by *children of wrath*, the apostle passively means *heirs of wrath*, exposed to God's displeasure. God was once a friend, but sin broke the knot of friendship; now God's smile is turned into a frown; we are now bound over to the sessions, and become children of wrath; 'And who knows the power of God's wrath?' Ps. xc. 11. 'The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion,' Prov. xix. 12. How did Haman's heart tremble, when the king rose up from the banquet in wrath? Esth. vii. 7. But God's wrath is infinite, all other is but as a spark to a flame; wrath in God is not a passion, as in us; but it is an act of God's holy will, whereby he abhors sin, and decrees to punish it. This wrath is very dismal; it is this wrath of God that imbitters afflictions in this life; when sickness comes attended with God's wrath, it puts conscience into an agony. The mingling of the fire with the hail made it so terrible, Exod. ix. 24. So mingling God's wrath with affliction, makes it torturing; it is the nail in the yoke. God's wrath, but when in a threatening (as a shower hanging in the cloud) made Eli's ears to tingle; what is it then, when this wrath is executed? It is terrible when the king rates and chides a traitor; but it is more dreadful when he causeth him to be set upon the rack, or to be broke upon the wheel: 'Who knows the power of God's wrath?' While we are children of wrath, 1. We have nothing to do with any of the promises; they are as the tree of life, bearing several sorts of fruit, but no right to pluck one leaf, Eph. ii. 3. 'Children of wrath.' ver. 12. 'Strangers to the covenant of promise.' The promises are as a fountain sealed. While we are in the state of nature, we see nothing but the flaming sword; and, as the apostle saith, Heb. x. 27. 'There remains nothing but a fearful looking for a fiery indignation.' 2. While children of wrath we are 'heirs to all God's curses,' Gal. iii. 10. How can the sinner eat and drink in that condition? Like Damaris' banquet, he sat at meat, and there was a sword hanging over his head by a small thread; one would think he could have little stomach to eat; so the sword of God's wrath and curse hangs every moment over a sinners head. We read of a flying roll written with curses, Zech. v. 3. There is a roll written with curses goes out against every person that lives and dies in sin: God's curse blasts wherever it comes. A curse on the sinner's name, a curse on his soul, a curse on his estate, posterity, a curse on the ordinances. Sad, if all a man did eat should turn to poison: the sinner eats and drinks his own damnation at God's table. Thus it is before conversion. As the love of God

makes every bitter thing sweet, so the curse of God makes every sweet thing bitter.

*Use.* See our misery by the fall, *Heirs of wrath*: and is this estate to be rested in? If a man be fallen under the king's displeasure, will he not labour to re-ingratiating himself into his favour! O let us flee from the wrath of God! And whither should we fly but to Jesus Christ? there's none else to shield off the wrath of God from us, 1 Thess. i. 10. 'Jesus hath delivered us from the wrath to come.'

3. Subject to all outward miseries: all the troubles incident to man's life are the bitter fruits of original sin. The sin of Adam hath 'subjected the creature to vanity,' Rom. viii. 20. Is it not a part of the creature's vanity, that all the comforts here below will not fill the heart, any more than the mariner's breath can fill the sails of a ship; Job xx. 22. 'In the midst of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.' There is still something wanting, and a man would have more: the heart is always hydropical; it thirsts and is not satisfied. Solomon put all the creatures into a lembic; and when he came to extract the spirit and quintessence, there was nothing but froth, 'all was vanity,' Eccl. i. 2. Nay, it is vexing vanity; not only emptiness, but bitterness. Our life is labour and sorrow; we come into the world with a cry, go out with a groan, Psal. xc. 10. Some have said, that they would not be to live the life, they have lived over again, because their life hath had more water in it than wine; more water of tears, than wine of joy: *Quid est diu vere nix diu torqueri*, Aug. 'Man is born to trouble,' Job v. 7. Every one is not born heir to land, but he is born heir to trouble; as well separate weight from lead. We do not finish our troubles in this life, but change them. Trouble is the vermin bred out of the putrid matter of sin. Whence are all our fears, but from sin? 1 John iv. 18. 'There is torment in fear.' Fear is the ague of the soul, sets it a shaking; some fear want, others alarms, others fear loss of relations; If we rejoice, it is with trembling. Whence are all our disappointments of hopes but from sin? Where we look for comfort, there a cross: where we expect honey, there we taste wormwood. Whence is it that the earth is filled with violence, that the wicked oppresseth the man which is more righteous than he? Hab. i. 13. Whence is it that so much fraudulency in dealing, so much falseness in friendship, such crosses in relations? Whence is it children prove undutiful? They that should be as the staff of the parent's age, are a sword to pierce their hearts: whence is it servants are unfaithful to their masters? The apostle speaks of some who have entertained angels in their houses, Heb. xiii. 2. But how oft, instead of entertaining angels in their houses, do some entertain devils? Whence are all the mutinies and divisions in a kingdom? 2 Chron.



xv. 5. 'In those days there was no peace to them that went out, nor to him that came in.' All this is but the sour corn in that apple our first parents ate, viz. fruit of original sin. Besides all the deformities and diseases of the body, fevers, convulsions, catarrhs, *Macies et nova febrium terris incubuit calors*—These are from sin. There had never been a stone in the kidneys, if it had not been first a stone in the heart. Yea, the death of the body, is the fruit and result of original sin, Rom. v. 12. 'Sin entered into the world, and death by sin.' Adam was made immortal, conditionally, if he had not sinned; sin digged Adam's grave. Death is terrible to nature: Lewis king of France forbade all that came into his court, to mention the name of death in his ears. The Socinians say, that Death comes only from the infirmness of the constitution. But the apostle saith, Sin ushered in death into the world: by sin came death. Certainly, had not Adam ate of the tree of knowledge, he had not died, Gen. ii. 17. 'In the day thou eatest, thou shalt surely die,' implying, if Adam had not eaten, he should not have died. O then see the misery ensuing upon original sin! Sin dissolves the harmony and good temperature of the body, it pulls this frame in pieces.

4. Original sin without repentance exposeth to hell and damnation. This is the second death, Rev. xx. 14. Two things in it;

(1.) *Pœna damni*, Punishment of loss: The soul is banished from the beatifical presence of God, in whose presence is fulness of joy.

(2.) *Pœna sensus*, Punishment of sense: The sinner feels the scalding vials of God's wrath; It is penetrating, abiding, John iii. 36. Reserved, 2 Pet. ii. 17. If, when God's anger be kindled but a little, and a spark or two of it flies into a man's conscience here in this life, it be so terrible; what then will it be when God stirs up all his anger? In hell there is the worm and the fire, Mark ix. 44. Hell is the very accent and emphasis of misery: there's judgment without mercy. O what flames of wrath, what seas of vengeance, what rivers of brimstone, are poured out here upon the damned! Bellarmine is of opinion, That one glimpse of hell-fire were enough to make the most flagitious sinner to turn Christian? nay, live like an hermit, a most strict mortified life. What is all other fire to this, but painted fire? *Ejus adesse intolerabile ejus abesse impossibile*: to bear it will be intolerable, to avoid it will be impossible; and these hell-torments are for ever, have no period put to them, Rev. ix. 6. 'They shall seek death, and shall not find it.' Origen fancied a fiery stream in which the souls of sinful men were to be purged after this life, and then to pass into heaven; but it is for ever. The breath of the Lord kindles that fire; and

where shall we find engines or buckets to quench it? Rev. xiv. 11. 'And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest night nor day.' Thank original sin for all.

*Use 1.* What sad thoughts should we have of this primitive original sin, that hath created so many miseries? What honey can be got out of this lion? What grapes can we gather off this thorn? It sets heaven and earth against us: while we chuse this bramble to rule, fire comes out of the bramble to devour us.

2. How are all believers bound to Jesus Christ, who hath freed them from that misery to which sin hath exposed them? Eph. i. 7. 'In whom we have redemption through his blood.' Sin hath brought trouble and a curse into the world: Christ hath sanctified the trouble, and removed the curse. Nay, he hath not only freed believers from misery, but purchased for them a crown of glory and immortality, 1 Pet. v. 4. 'When the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.'

## OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

*Q. XX. DID God leave all mankind to perish in this estate of sin and misery?*

*Ans.* No, he entered into a covenant of grace to deliver the elect out of that estate, and bring them into a state of grace by a Redeemer.

Isa. lv. 3. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with you.' Man being by his fall, plunged into a labyrinth of misery, and having no way left to recover himself, God was pleased to enter into a new covenant with him, and so restore him to life by a Redeemer.

The great proposition I shall go upon is, that there is a new covenant ratified between God and the elect.

*Q. What is the new covenant?*

*Ans.* It is a solemn compact and agreement made between God and fallen man, wherein the Lord undertakes to be our God, and to make us his people.

*Q. What names are given to the covenant?*

*Ans.* 1. It is called a covenant of peace, Ezek. xxxvii. 26. because it seals up reconciliation between God and humble sinners. Before this covenant there was nothing but enmity: God did not love us; a creature that offends cannot be loved by a holy God: and we did not love him; a God that condemns, cannot be loved by a guilty creature; so that there was war on both sides. But God hath found out a way in the new

covenant to reconcile differing parties, so that it is fitly called a covenant of peace.

2. It is called a covenant of grace, and well it may : For, 1. It was with grace, that, when we had forfeited the first covenant, after we had cast away ourselves. The covenant of grace is *tabula post naufragium*, as a plank after shipwreck. O the free grace of God, that he should parly with sinners, and set his wisdom and mercy a-work to bring rebels into the bond of the covenant.

(2.) It is a covenant of grace, because it is a royal charter, all made up of terms of grace ; that ‘ God will cast our sins behind his back : ’ that ‘ he will love us freely, ’ Hos. xiv. 4. That ‘ he will give us a will to accept of the mercy of the covenant, and strength to perform the conditions of the covenant, ’ Ezek. xxxvii. 26. All this is pure grace.

Q. *Why would God make a covenant with us ?*

Ans. It is out of indulgence, favour, and respect to us. A tyrant will not enter into a covenant with slaves, he will not shew them such respect. God’s entering into covenant with us, to be our God, is a dignity he puts upon us. A covenant is *insigne honoris*, a note of distinction between God’s people and heathens, Ezek. xvi. 22. ‘ I will establish my covenant with thee. ’ When the Lord told Abraham that he would enter into covenant with him, ‘ Abraham fell upon his face, ’ Gen. xvii. 2. as being amazed that the God of glory should bestow such a favour upon him.

2. God makes a covenant with us, to tie us fast to him ; it is called in Ezekiel, the ‘ bond of the covenant. ’ God knows we have slippery hearts, therefore he will have a covenant to bind us : it is a horrid impiety to go away from God after covenant. If one of the vestal nuns, who had vowed herself to religion, was deflowered, the Romans caused her to be burnt alive. It is perjury to depart from God after solemn covenant.

Q. *How doth the covenant of grace differ from the first covenant made with Adam ?*

Ans. 1. *Difference.* The terms of the first covenant were more strict and severe. For, 1. The least failing would have made the covenant with Adam null and void, but many failings do not null the covenant of grace : I grant, the least sin is a trespass upon the covenant, but it doth not make it null and void. There may be many failings in the conjugal relation, but every failing doth not break the marriage-bond. It would be sad, if, as oft as we break covenant with God he should break covenant with us ; but God will not take advantage of every failing, but in ‘ anger remember mercy. ’

2. The first covenant being broken, allowed the sinner no remedy, all doors of hope were shut ; but the new covenant



allows the sinner a remedy : it leaves room for repentance, it provides a mediator, Heb. xii. 24. ' Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.'

*2d Differ.* The first covenant did run all upon ' working,' the second upon ' believing,' Rom. iv. 5.

*Q. But are not works required in the covenant of grace ?*

*Ans.* Yes ; Tit. iii. 8. ' This is a faithful saying, that they which believe in God, be careful to maintain good works.' But the covenant of grace doth not require works in the same manner as the covenant of works did. In the first covenant, works were required as the condition of life ; in the second, they are required only as the signs of a man that is alive. In the first covenant, works were required as grounds of salvation ; in the new covenant, they are required as evidences of our love to God. In the first, they were required to the justification of our persons ; in the new, to the testification of our grace.

*Q. What is the condition of the covenant of grace ?*

*Ans.* The main condition is faith.

*Q. But why is faith more the condition of the new covenant than any other grace ?*

*Ans.* To exclude all glorying in the creature ; faith is an humble grace. If repentance or works were the condition of the covenant, a man would say, It is my righteousness hath saved me : but if it be of faith, where is boasting ? Faith fetcheth all from Christ, and gives all the glory to Christ ; it is a most humble grace. Hence it is God hath singled out this grace to be the condition of the covenant.

And if faith be the condition of the covenant of grace, it excludes desperate presumptuous sinners from the covenant. They say there is a covenant of grace, and they shall be saved : but did you ever know a bond without a condition ? The condition of the covenant is faith, and if thou hast no faith, thou hast no more to do with the covenant than a foreigner or a country farmer with the city charter.

*Use 1. Of information.* See the amazing goodness of God, to enter into covenant with us : he never entered into covenant with the angels when they fell. It was much condescension in God to enter into covenant with us in a state of innocency, but it was more to enter in a state of enmity. In this covenant of grace, we may see the cream of God's love, and the working of his bowels to sinners. This is a marriage covenant, Jer. iii. 14. ' I am married to you, saith the Lord.' In the new covenant, God makes himself over to us, and what can he give more ? And he makes over his promises to us, and what better bond can we have ?

*Use 2. Of trial.* Whether we are in covenant with God. There are three characters.

1. God's covenant-people are an humble people, 1 Pet. v. 5. 'Be ye clothed with humility.' God's people esteem of others better than themselves; they shrink into nothing in their own thoughts, Phil. ii. 3. David cries out, 'I am a worm, and no man,' Psal. xxii. 6. though a faint, though a king, yet a worm. When Moses' face shined, he covered it with a veil: God's people, when they shine most in grace, are covered with 'the veil of humility.' Pride excludes from the covenant; 'God resisteth the proud,' 1 Pet. i. 3. and sure such are not in covenant with God, whom he resists.

2. A people in covenant with God, are a willing people; though they cannot serve God perfectly, they serve him willingly. They do not grudge God a little time spent in his worship; they do not hesitate or murmur at sufferings; they will go through a sea and a wilderness, if God call; Psal. cx. 3. 'Thy people shall be a willing people:' Heb. 'a people of willingness.' This spontaneity and willingness, is from the attractive power of God's Spirit: the Spirit doth not *impellere*, force, but *trahere*, sweetly draw the will; and this willingness in religion, makes all our services accepted. God doth sometimes accept of willingness without the work, but never the work without willingness.

3. God's covenant-people are a consecrated people, they have holiness to the Lord written upon them, Deut. vii. 6. 'Thou art a holy people to the Lord thy God.' God's covenant-people are separated from the world, and sanctified by the Spirit. The priests under the law were not only to wash in the great laver, but were arrayed with glorious apparel, Exod. xxviii. 2. This was typical, to shew God's people are not only washed from gross sins, but adorned with holiness of heart; they bear not only God's name, but image. Tamerlane refused a pot of gold, when he saw it had not his father's stamp upon it but the Roman stamp. Holiness is God's stamp, if he doth not see this stamp upon us, he will not own us for his covenant-people.

*Use 3. Of Exhortation.* To such as are out of covenant, labour to get into covenant, and have God for your God. How glad would the old world have been of an ark? How industrious should we be to get within the ark of the covenant? Consider, 1. The misery of such as live and die out of the covenant with God. (1.) Such have none to go to in an hour of distress. When conscience accuseth, when sickness approacheth, (which is but an harbinger to bespeak a lodging for death) then what will you do? Whither will you flee? Will you look to Christ for help? He is a mediator only for such as are in covenant. O how will you be filled with horror and despair! and be as Saul, 1 Sam. xxviii. 15. 'The Philistines make war against me, and the Lord is departed.' (2.) Till you are in covenant with

God, there is no mercy. The mercy-seat was placed upon the ark, and the mercy-seat was no larger than the ark; to shew, that the mercy of God reacheth no further than the covenant.

2. The excellency of the covenant of grace; it is a better covenant than the covenant made with Adam. 1st, Because it is more friendly and propitious. Those services which would have been rejected in the first covenant, are accepted in the second. Here God accepts of the will for the deed, 2 Cor. viii. 10. here sincerity is crowned in the covenant of grace, wherein we are weak, God will give strength; and wherein we come short, God will accept of a surety. 2dly, It is a better covenant, because it is surer, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 'Thou hast made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.' The first covenant was not sure, it stood upon a tottering foundation, works; Adam had no sooner a stock of righteousness to trade with, but he broke: but the covenant of grace is sure; it is confirmed with God's decree, and it rests upon two mighty pillars, the oath of God, and the blood of God. 3dly, It hath better privileges. The covenant of grace brings preferment. Our nature is now more ennobled, we are raised to higher glory than in innocency, we are advanced to sit upon Christ's throne, Rev. iii. 21. We are by virtue of the covenant of grace nearer to Christ than the angels: they are his friends, we his spouse. 3. God is willing to be in covenant with you. Why doth God woo and beseech you by his ambassadors to be reconciled, if he were not willing to be in covenant.

Obj. *I would fain be in covenant with God, but I have been a great sinner, and I fear God will not admit me into covenant.*

Ans. If thou feelest thy sins, and lotheest thyself for them, yet God will take thee into covenant, Isa. xliii. 24. 'Thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities, I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions.' As the sea covers great rocks, so God's covenant-mercy covers great sins. Some of the Jews that crucified Christ, yet had their sins washed away in his blood.

Obj. *But I am not worthy that ever God should admit me into covenant.*

Ans. It never came into God's thought to make a new covenant upon terms of worthiness. If God should shew mercy to none but such as are worthy, then he must shew mercy to none at all. But it is God's design in the new covenant to advance the riches of grace, to love us freely: and when we have no worthiness of our own, to accept us through Christ's worthiness. Therefore let not unworthiness discourage you; it is not unworthiness excludes any from the covenant, but unwillingness.

Q. *What shall we do that we may be in covenant with God?*

Ans. 1. Seek to God by prayer. *Exige a Domino misericordium*, Aug. "Lord, be my God in covenant." The Lord hath



made an exprefs promise, that, upon our prayer to him, the covenant ſhould be ratified, he will be our God, and we ſhall be his people, Zech. xiii. 9. ‘ They ſhall call upon my name, and I will hear them ; I will ſay it is my people ; and they ſhall ſay, the Lord is my God.’ Only it muſt be an importunate prayer ; come as earneſt ſuiters, reſolve to take no denial.

2. If you would be in covenant with God, break off the covenant with ſin ; before the marriage covenant there muſt be a divorce, 1 Sam. vii. 3. ‘ If ye return to the Lord with all your hearts, put away the ſtrange gods ; and they put away Aſhtaroth ;’ viz. their female gods. Will any King enter into covenant with that man who is in league with his enemies ?

3. If you would enter into the bond of the covenant, get faith in the blood of the covenant. Chriſt’s blood is the blood of atonement ; believe in this blood, and you are ſafely arked in God’s mercy ; Eph. ii. 13. ‘ Ye are made nigh by the blood of Chriſt.’

*Uſe 4. Of comfort* to ſuch as can make out their covenant-interest in God. (1.) You that are in covenant with God, all your ſins are pardoned. Pardon is the crowning mercy, Pſalm ciii. 3. ‘ Who forgiveth thy iniquity, who crowneth thee, &c.’ This is a breach of the covenant, Jer. xxxi. 33. ‘ I will be their God, and I will forgive their iniquity.’ Sin being pardoned, all wrath ceaſeth. How terrible is it when but a ſpark of God’s wrath flies into a man’s conſcience ? But ſin being forgiven, no more wrath. God doth not appear now in the fire or earthquake, but covered with a rain-bow full of mercy.

2. All your temporal mercies are fruits of the covenant. Wicked men have mercies by providence, not by virtue of a covenant ; with God’s leave, not with his love. But ſuch as are in covenant have their mercies ſweetened with God’s love, and they ſwim to them in the blood of Chriſt. As Naaman ſaid to Gehazi, 2 Kings v. 23. ‘ Take two talents,’ ſo ſaith God, to ſuch as are in covenant, take two talents ; take health, and take Chriſt with it : take riches, and take my love with them ; take the veniſon, and take the bleſſing with it : Take two talents.

(3.) You may upon all occaſions, plead the covenant. If you are hunted with temptations, plead the covenant ; Lord, thou haſt promiſed to bruife Satan under my feet ſhortly ; wilt thou ſuffer thy child to be thus worried ? Take off the roaring lion. If in want, plead the covenant ; Lord, thou haſt ſaid, ‘ I ſhall want no good thing ;’ wilt thou ſave me from hell, and not from want ? wilt thou give me a kingdom, and deny me daily bread ?

(4.) If in covenant with God all things ſhall co-operate for your good : *Etiam mala cedunt in bonum*, Pſal. xxv. 10. Not

only golden paths, but his bloody paths. Every wind of providence shall blow them nearer heaven. Affliction shall humble and purify, Heb. xii. 10. Out of the bitterest drug, God distils your salvation. Afflictions add to the saints glory. The more the diamond is cut, the more it sparkles; the heavier the saints cross is, the heavier shall be their crown.

(5.) If thou art in covenant once, then for ever in covenant. The text calls it, 'an everlasting covenant.' Such as are in covenant are elected; God's electing love is unchangeable, Jer. xxxii. 40. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them; but I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me.' God will so love the saints that he will not forsake them: And the saints shall so fear God, that they shall not forsake him. 'Tis a covenant of eternity: It must be so; for who is this covenant made with? Is it not with believers? and have not they coalition and union with Christ? Christ is the head, they are the body, Eph. i. 23. This is a near union, much like that union between God the Father and Christ, John xvii. 21. 'As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.' Now the union between Christ and the saints being so inseparable, it can never be dissolved, or the covenant made void; you may die with comfort.

(6.) Thou art in covenant with God, and thou art going to thy God: Behold a death-bed cordial; death breaks the union between the body and the soul, but perfects the union between Christ and the soul. This hath made the saints desire death as the bride the wedding-day, Phil. i. 23. *Cupio dissolvi*, Lead me, Lord, to that glory, (said one) a glimpse whereof I have seen, as in a glass darkly.

*Use 5. Of Direction.* To shew how you should walk who have tasted of covenant-mercy, live as a people in covenant with God. As you differ from others in respect of dignity, so you must in point of carriage.

*1<sup>st</sup>*, You must love this God. God's love to you calls for love. 1. It is *Amor gratiatus*, a free love. Why should God pass by others, and take you into a league of friendship with himself? In the law, God passed by the lion and eagle, and chose the dove: So he passes by the noble and mighty. 2. It is *Amor plenus*, a full love. When God takes you into covenant, you are his *Hephzibah*, Isa. lxii. 5. his delight is in you; he gives you the key of all his treasure, he heaps pearls upon you, he settles heaven and earth upon you; he gives you a bunch of grapes by the way, and saith 'Son, all I have is thine.' And doth not all this call for love? who can tread upon these hot coals, and his heart not burn in love to God.

*2<sup>dly</sup>*, Walk holily. The covenant hath made you a royal

nation, therefore be an holy people. Shine as lights in the world; live as earthly angels. God hath taken you into covenant, that you and he may have communion together, and what is it keeps up your communion with God, but holiness;

*Sdly*, Walk thankfully, Psal. ciii. 1. God is your God in covenant; he hath done more for you, than if he had made you ride upon the high places of the earth, and given you crowns and sceptres. O take the cup of salvation, and bless the Lord. Eternity will be little enough to praise him. Musicians love to play on their music where there is the loudest sound; and God loves to bestow his mercies where he may have the loudest praises. You that have angels reward, do angels work. Begin that work of praise here, which you hope to be always doing in heaven.



## CHRIST THE MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT.

HEB. xii. 24. *Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, &c.*

JESUS CHRIST is the sum and quintessence of the gospel; the wonder of angels; the joy and triumph of saints. The name of Christ is sweet, it is as music in the ear, honey in the mouth, and a cordial at the heart.

I shall wave the context, and only speak of that which concerns our present purpose: having discoursed of the covenant of grace, I shall speak now of the Mediator of the covenant, and the restorer of lapsed sinners, 'Jesus the mediator of the covenant.'

There are several names and titles in scripture given to Christ, as the great restorer of mankind: 1. Sometimes he is called a Saviour, Mat. i. 21. 'His name shall be called Jesus.' The Hebrew word for JESUS, signifies a Saviour, and whom he saves from hell, he saves from sin: where Christ is a Saviour, he is a sanctifier, Matth. i. 21. 'He shall save his people from their sins.' There is no other Saviour, Acts iv. 12. 'Neither is there salvation in any other.' As there was but one ark to save the world from drowning, so there is but one Jesus to save sinners from damning. As Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, Ruth i. 11. 'Are there yet any more sons in my womb? So hath God any other sons in the womb of his eternal decree, to be saviours to us, besides Christ? Job xxviii. 14. 'Where shall wisdom be found? the depth saith, it is not in me; and the sea saith, it is not in me.' Let me allude, Where shall salvation be found? The angel saith, it is not in me; morality saith, it is not in me: the ordinance saith, it is not in me:



Christ alone is the well-spring of life ; the ordinance is the conduit-pipe that conveys salvation, but Christ is the spring that feeds it. ‘ Neither is there salvation in any other.’

2. Sometimes Christ is called a Redeemer, Isa. lix. 20. ‘ The Redeemer shall come to Sion.’ Some understand it of Cyrus, others of an angel : but the most ancient Jewish doctors understand it of Christ, the Redeemer of the elect : Job xix. 25. ‘ My Redeemer liveth.’ The Hebrew word for Redeemer, signifies such an one as is near a-kin, and hath right to redeem a mortgage ; so Christ is near of kin to us, being our elder brother, therefore hath the best right to redeem us.

3. Christ is called a Mediator in the text, ‘ Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.’ The Greek word for Mediator, signifies a middle person, one that doth make up the breach between two disagreeing parties. God and we were at variance by sin, now Christ doth mediate and umpire between us ; he reconciles us to God through his blood, therefore he is called the Mediator of the new covenant. There is no way of communion and intercourse between God and man, but in and through a Mediator : Christ takes away the enmity in us, and the wrath of God, and so makes peace. Nor is Christ only a Mediator of reconciliation, but intercession, Heb. ix. 24. ‘ Christ is entered, not into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.’ The priest, when he had slain the sacrifice, was to go with the blood before the altar and mercy-seat, and shew it to the Lord. Now, in Christ our blessed Mediator, consider two things. (1.) His person : (2.) His graces.

1. His person : His person is amiable ; he is all made up of love and beauty. He is the effigies of his Father, Heb. i. 3. ‘ The express image of his person.’ Consider,

(1.) Christ’s person in two natures.

(2 ) His two natures in one person.

(1.) Christ’s person in two natures : 1. Look upon his human nature as incarnate. The Valentinians deny his human nature ; but John i. 14. ‘ the Word was made flesh :’ It is spoken of Christ the promised Messiah. Christ took our flesh, that the same nature which sinned might suffer ; and ‘ The Word was made flesh,’ that through the glass of his human nature we might look upon God.

*Q. Why is Christ called the Word ?*

*Ans.* Because, as a word is the interpreter of the mind, and reveals what is in a man’s breast ; so Jesus Christ reveals his Father’s mind to us, concerning the great matters of our salvation, John i. 18. Were it not for Christ’s manhood, the sight of the Godhead would be formidable to us : but through Christ’s flesh we may look upon God without terror. And

Christ took our flesh, that he might know how to pity us; he knows what it is to be faint, sorrowful, tempted, Psal. ciii. 14. 'He knows our frame.' And he took our flesh, that he might (as Austin saith) enoble our human nature with honour. Christ having married our flesh hath exalted it above the angelical nature.

2. Look upon Christ's divine nature. Christ may be fitly compared to Jacob's ladder, Gen. xxviii. 12. which reacheth from earth to heaven: Christ's human nature was the foot of the ladder, which stood upon earth; his divine nature the top of the ladder, which reacheth to heaven. This being a grand article of our faith, I shall amplify: I know the Arians, Socinians, Ebionites would rob Christ of the best jewel of his crown, his Godhead; but the Apostolical, Nicene, Athanasian creed, affirm Christ's Deity; to this the churches of Helvetia, Bohemia, Wittembergh, Transilvania, &c. give their full consent; and the scripture is clear for it. He is called the 'mighty God,' Isa. ix. 6. 'And in him dwells the fulness of the Godhead,' Col. ii. 9. He is of the same nature and essence with the Father. So Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostom: 1. Is God the Father called Almighty? so is Christ, Rev. i. 8. 'The Almighty.' 2. Is God the Father, the heart-searcher? so is Christ, John ii. 25. 'He knew their thoughts.' 3. Is God the Father omnipresent? so is Christ, John iii. 13. 'The Son of man which is in heaven.' Christ as God was then in heaven, when as man he was upon the earth.

Q. *Is God eternal?*

Ans. Christ is the everlasting Father, Isa. ix. 6. which scripture may be urged against the Corinthian hereticks, who denied the pre-existency of Christ's Godhead, and held that Christ had no being till he derived it from the Virgin Mary.

4. Doth divine worship belong to the first person in the Trinity? so it doth to Christ, John v. 23. Heb. i. 6. 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' 5. Is creation proper to the Deity? this is a flower of Christ's crown, Col. i. 16. 'By him were all things created.' 6. Is invocation proper to the Deity? this is given to Christ, Acts vii. 57. 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' 7. Is recumbency and trust peculiar to God the Father? this is given to Christ, John xiv. 1. 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.' Christ must needs be God, not only that the divine nature might support the human from sinking under God's wrath, but also to give value and weight to his sufferings.

Christ being God, his death and passion is meritorious; Christ's blood is called *sanguis Dei*, the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. because the person who was offered in sacrifice was God as well as man. This is an invincible support to believers; it was God

who was offended, and it was God who satisfied. Thus Christ's person in two natures.

(2.) Consider Christ's two natures in one person, God-man, 1 Tim. iii. 16. 'God manifest in the flesh.' Christ had a twofold substance, divine and human; yet not a twofold subsistence, both natures make but one Christ. A scion may be grafted into another tree, a pear-tree into an apple, which though it bear different fruits, is but one tree; so Christ's manhood is united to the Godhead in an ineffable manner; yet though there are two natures, yet but one person. This union of the two natures in Christ was not by transmutation, the divine nature changed into the human, or the human into the divine; nor by mixture, the two natures mingled together, as wine and water are mixed: both the natures of Christ remain distinct, yet make not two distinct persons, but one person; the human nature not God, yet one with God.

3dly, Consider Christ, our Mediator, in his graces: these are the sweet favour of his ointments, that make the virgins love him. Christ, our blessed Mediator, is said to be full 'of grace and truth,' John i. 14. He had the anointing of the Spirit without measure, John iii. 35. Grace in Christ is after a more eminent and glorious manner than it is in any of the saints.

1. Jesus Christ our Mediator, hath perfection in every grace, Col. i. 19. He is a panoply, magazine and store-house of all heavenly treasure, all fulness: This no saint on earth hath; he may excel in one grace, but not in all; as Abraham was eminent for faith, Moses for meekness; but Christ excels in every grace.

2. There is a never-failing fulness of grace in Christ: grace in the saints is ebbing and flowing, it is not always in the same degree and proportion; at one time David's faith was strong, at another time so faint and weak, that you could hardly feel any pulse, Psal. xxxi. 22. 'I said, I am cut off from before thine eyes.' But grace in Christ is a never failing-fulness, it did never abate in the least degree, he never lost a drop of his holiness. What was said of Joseph, may more truly be applied to Christ, Gen. xlix. 23. 'The archers shot at him, but his bow abode in strength:' Men and devils shot at him, but his grace remained in its full vigour and strength; 'his bow abode in strength.'

3. Grace in Christ is communicative, his grace is for us: the holy oil of the Spirit was poured on the head of this blessed Aaron, that it might run down upon us. The saints have not grace to bestow on others: When the foolish virgins would have bought oil of their neighbour virgins, Matth. xxv. 9. 'Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out:' The wise virgins answered, 'Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you.' The saints have no grace to spare to others; but Christ dissipeth his grace to others: grace in the saints is as water in the vessel,



grace in Christ is as water in the spring, John i. 16. 'Of his fulness have we received grace for grace.' Set a glass under a still or limbeck, and it receives water from the limbeck drop by drop; so the saints have the drops and influences of Christ's grace distilling upon them. What a rich consolation is this to those who either have no grace, or their stock is but low! They may go to Christ, the Mediator, as a treasury of grace: Lord, I am indigent; but whither shall I carry my empty vessel, but to a full fountain? Psal. lxxxvii. 7. 'all my fresh springs are in thee; I am guilty, thou hast blood to pardon me; I am polluted, thou hast grace to cleanse me; I am sick unto death,' thou hast the 'balm of Gilead' to heal me, Gen xli. 56. Joseph opened all the store-houses of corn: Christ is our Joseph, that opens all the treasuries and store-houses of grace, and communicates to us. He is not only sweet as the honey-comb, but drops as the honey-comb: this is a great comfort, in Christ our Mediator there is a *cornucopia*, and fulness of all grace; and Christ is desirous that we should come to him for grace, like the full breast that aches till it be drawn.

*Use 1.* Admire the glory of this Mediator; he is God-man, he is co-essentially glorious with the Father. All the Jews that saw Christ in the flesh, did not see his Godhead; all that saw the man did not see the Messiah; the temple of Solomon within was embellished with gold; travellers, as they passed along, might see the outside of the temple, but only the priests saw the glory which sparkled within the temple; only believers, who are made priests unto God, Rev. i. 6. see Christ's glorious inside, the Godhead shining through the manhood.

*Use 2.* If Christ be God-man in one person, then look unto Jesus Christ alone for salvation. There must be something of the Godhead to fasten our hope upon; in Christ there is Godhead and manhood hypostatically united. If we could weep rivers of tears, out-fast Moses on the mount, if we were exact moralists, touching the law blameless, if we could arrive at the highest degree of sanctification in this life, all this would not save us, without looking to the merits of him who is God: our perfect holiness in heaven is not the cause of our salvation, but the righteousness of Jesus Christ. To this therefore did Paul flee, as to the horns of the altar, Phil. iii. 9. 'That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness.' It is true, we may look to our graces as evidences of salvation, but to Christ's blood only as the cause. In time of Noah's flood, all that trusted to the high hills and trees, and not to the ark, were drowned, Heb. xii. 2. 'Looking unto Jesus;' and so look unto him, as to believe in him, that so Christ may not only be united to our nature, but to our persons, John xx. 31. 'That believing, you may have life through his name.'

*Uſe 3.* Is Jeſus Chriſt God and man in one perſon? This, as it ſhews the dignity of believers, that they are nearly related to one of the greateſt perſons that is, Col. ii. 9. ‘ In him dwells the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily :’ ſo it is of unſpeakable comfort. Chriſt’s two natures being married together, the divine and human ; all that Chriſt in either of his natures can do for believers, he will do : In his human nature he prays for them, in his divine nature he merits for them. This for the perſon of our Mediator.

*Uſe 4.* Admire the love of Chriſt our Mediator ! that he ſhould humble himſelf, and take our fleſh, that he might redeem us. Believers ſhould put Chriſt in their boſom, as the ſpouſe did, Cant. i. 13. ‘ Lie betwixt my breasts.’ What was ſaid of Ignatius, that the name of Jeſus was found written in his heart, ſhould be verified of every ſaint, he ſhould have Jeſus Chriſt written in his heart.

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## CHRIST A PROPHET.

DEUT. xviii. 15. *The Lord thy God will raiſe up unto thee a Prophet, &c.*

HAVING ſpoken of the perſon of Chriſt, we are next to ſpeak of the offices of Chriſt, Prophetical, Prieſtly, Regal.

1. Prophetical, ‘ The Lord thy God will raiſe up unto thee a Prophet.’ *Enunciator hic locus de Chriſto*, It is ſpoken of Chriſt. There are ſeveral names given to Chriſt as a Prophet : He is called ‘ the Counſellor,’ Iſa. vi. 9. *In uno Chriſto, Angelus fœderis completur*, Fagius. ‘ The Angel of the Covenant,’ Mal. iii. 1. ‘ A Lamp,’ 2 Sam. xxii. 19. ‘ The Morning-ſtar,’ Rev. xxii. 16. Jeſus Chriſt is the great Prophet of his church ; the woman of Samaria gave a ſhrewd gueſs, John iv. 16. He is the beſt teacher, he makes all other teaching effectual, Luke xxiv. 45. ‘ Then opened he their underſtanding.’ He did not only open the ſcriptures, but opened their underſtanding : He teacheth to profit, Iſa. xlvi. 17. ‘ I am the Lord thy God, who teacheth thee to profit.’

*Q. How Chriſt teacheth ?*

*Anſ.* 1. Externally, by his word, Pſal. cxix. 105. ‘ Thy word is a lamp to my feet.’ Such as pretend to have a light or revelation above the word, or contrary to it, never had their teaching from Chriſt, Iſa. viii. 20.

2. Chriſt teacheth theſe ſacred mysteries, inwardly, by the Spirit, John xvi. 13. The world knows not what it is, 1 Cor. ii. 14. ‘ The natural man receives not the things of God, neither

can he know them.' He knows not what it is to be transformed by the renewing of the mind, Rom. xii. 2. or what the inward workings of the Spirit mean; these are riddles and paradoxes to him. He may have more insight into the things of the world than a believer, but he doth not see the deep things of God. A swine may see an acorn under a tree, but he cannot see a star; he who is taught of Christ, sees the *arcana imperii*, the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.

Q. *What are the lessons Christ teacheth?*

Ans. 1. He teacheth us to see into our own hearts. Take the most mercurial wits, the greatest politicians, that understand the mysteries of state, yet they know not the mysteries of their own hearts, they cannot believe there is that evil in them as is, 2 Kings viii. 13. 'Is thy servant a dog?' *Grande profundum est homo*, Aug. The heart is a great deep, which is not easily fathomed. But Christ when he teacheth, removes the veil of ignorance; and lights a man into his own heart: And now he sees swarms of vain thoughts, he blusheth to see how sin mingles with his duties, his stars are mixed with clouds; he prays, as Austin, that God would deliver him from himself.

2. The second lesson Christ teacheth, is the *vanity* of the creature. A natural man sets up his happiness here, worships the golden image; but he that Christ hath anointed with his eye-salve, hath a spirit of discerning; he looks upon the creature in its night-dress, sees it to be empty and unsatisfying, not commensurate to an heaven-born soul. Solomon had put all the creatures into a limbeck, and when he came to extract the spirit and quintessence, all was vanity, Eccl. ii. 11. The apostle calls it a show or apparition, 1 Cor. vii. 31. having no intrinsecal goodness.

3. The third lesson is the excellency of things unseen. Christ gives the soul a sight of glory, a prospect of eternity, 2 Cor. iv. 18. 'We look not at things which are seen, but at things which are not seen.' Moses saw him who is 'invisible,' Heb. xi. 27. And the Patriarchs saw a better country, viz. an heavenly, Heb. xi. 16. where delights of angels, rivers of pleasure, the flower of joy, fully blow and ripen.

Q. *How doth Christ's teaching differ from others teaching?*

Ans. Several ways.

1. Christ teacheth the heart. Others may teach the ear, Christ the heart. Acts xvi. 14. 'Whose heart the Lord opened.' All that the dispensers of the word can do, is but to work knowledge, Christ works grace; they can but give you the light of the truth, Christ gives you the love of the truth; they can only teach you what to believe, Christ teacheth how to believe.

2. Christ gives us a taste of the word. Ministers may set the



food of the word before you, and carve it out to you; but it is only Christ causeth you to taste it, 1 Pet. ii. 3. 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious,' Psal. xxxiv. 8. 'Taste and see that the Lord is good.' It is one thing to hear a truth preached, another thing to taste it; one thing to read a promise, another thing to taste it. David had got a taste of the word, Ps. cxix. 102, 183. 'Thou hast taught me: How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.' The apostle calls it the savour of knowledge, 2 Cor. ii. 14. The light of knowledge is one thing, the savour another. Christ makes us taste a favouriness in the word.

3. Christ, when he teacheth, makes us obey. Others may instruct, but cannot command obedience: they teach to be humble, but men remain proud. The Prophet had been denouncing judgments against the people of Judah, but they would not hear, Jer. xlv. 17. 'We will do whatsoever goeth out of our own mouth, to bake cakes to the queen of heaven.' Men come *quasi* armed in coat of mail, that the sword of the word will not enter; but when Christ comes to teach, he removes this obstinacy, he not only informs the judgment, but inclines the will. He doth not only come with the light of his word, but the rod of his strength, and makes the stubborn sinner yield to him: His grace is irresistible.

4. Christ teacheth easily. Others teach with difficulty. Difficulty in finding out a truth, and in inculcating it, Isa. xxviii. 40. 'Precept *must* be upon precept, and line upon line.' Some may teach all their lives, and the word take no impression: They complain, as Isa. xlix. 4. 'I have spent my labour in vain;' plow on rocks: But Christ the great Prophet teacheth with ease. He can with the least touch of his Spirit convert; he can say, 'Let there be light;' with a word he conveys grace.

5. Christ, when he teacheth, makes men willing to learn. Men may teach others, but they have no mind to learn, Prov. i. 7. 'Fools despise instruction;' they rage at the word, as if a patient should rage at the physician, when he brings him a cordial; thus backward are men to their own salvation. But Christ makes his people a 'willing people,' Psal. cx. 3. They prize knowledge, and hang it as a jewel upon their ear. Those that Christ teacheth, say, as Isa. ii. 3. 'Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in them;' and as Acts x. 33. 'We are all here present before God, to hear all things commanded.'

6. Christ, when he teacheth, doth not only illuminate, but animate. He doth so teach, as he doth quicken, John viii. 12. 'I am the light of the world; he that follows me shall have *lumen vitæ*, the light of life.' By nature we are dead, there-

fore unfit for teaching ; who will make an oration to the dead ? But Christ teacheth them that are dead, he gives the light of life. As when Lazarus was dead, Christ said, ‘ Come forth,’ and he made the dead to hear, Lazarus came forth : So when Christ saith to the dead soul, come forth of the grave of unbelief, he hears Christ’s voice, and comes forth, it is the light of life. The philosophers say, *calor ex lux confcrecunt*, light and heat increase together. ’Tis true here, where Christ comes with his light, there is the heat of spiritual life going along with it.

*Use 1. Of information.* *Branch 1.* See here an argument of Christ’s divinity : had he not been God, he could never have known the mind of God, or revealed to us those *arcana cæli*, those deep mysteries, which no man or angel could find out. Who but God can anoint the eyes of the blind, and give not only light, but sight ? who but he who hath the key of David, can open the heart ? who but God can bow the iron sinew of the will ? He only who is God can enlighten the conscience, and make the stony heart bleed.

*Branch 2.* See what a *cornucopia*, or plenty of wisdom is in Christ, who is the great doctor of his church, and gives saving knowledge to all the elect. The body of the sun must needs be full of clarity and brightness, which enlightens the whole world : Christ is the great luminary ; in him are hid all treasures of knowledge, Col. ii. 3. The middle lamp of the sanctuary gave light to all the other lamps : Christ diffuseth his glorious light to others. We are apt to admire the learning of Aristotle and Plato ; alas ! what is this poor spark of light to that which is in Christ, from whose infinite wisdom both men and angels light their lamp.

*Branch 3.* See the misery of man in the state of nature. Before Christ come to be their prophet, they are enveloped with ignorance and darkness. Men know nothing in a salvifical, sanctified manner, they know nothing as they ought to know, 1 Cor. viii. 2. This is sad : 1. Men in the dark cannot discern colours ; so in the state of nature they cannot discern between morality and grace : they take one for the other, *pro dea nubem*, 2. In the dark the greatest beauty is hid : let there be rare flowers in the garden, and pictures in the room, yet in the dark their beauty is veiled over ; so, though there be such transcendent beauty in Christ as amazeth the angels, a man in the state of nature sees none of this beauty. What is Christ to him ? or heaven to him ? The veil is upon their heart. 3. A man in the dark is in danger every step he goes ; so a man in the state of nature is in danger, every step, of falling into hell. Thus it is before Christ teacheth us ; nay, the darkness in which a sinner is, while in an unregenerate state, is worse than natural darkness ; for natural darkness affrights, Gen. xv. 12. ‘ An

horror of great darkness fell upon Abraham.' But the spiritual darkness is not accompanied with horror, men tremble not at their condition; nay, they like their condition well enough, John iii. 19. 'Men loved darkness.' This is their sad condition, till Jesus Christ comes as a prophet to teach them, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

*Branch 4.* See the happy condition of the children of God, they have Christ to be their prophet, Isa. liv. 13. 'All thy children shall be taught of the Lord,' 1 Cor. i. 30. 'He is made to us wisdom.' One man cannot see by another's eyes: but believers see with Christ's eyes, 'In his light they see light:' Christ gives them the light of grace, and light of glory.

*Use 2.* Labour to have Christ for your prophet: he teacheth savingly: he is an interpreter of a thousand, he can untie those knots which puzzle very angels. Till Christ teach, never learn any lesson; till Christ is made to us wisdom, we shall never be wise to salvation.

*Q. What shall we do to have Christ for our teacher?*

*Ans.* See your need of Christ's teaching; you cannot see your way without this morning-star; some speak much of the light of reason improved; alas! the plumb-line of reason is too short to fathom the deep things of God: the light of reason will no more help a man to believe, than the light of a candle will help him to understand. A man can no more, by the power of nature reach Christ, than an infant can reach the top of the pyramids, or the ostrich fly up to the stars; see your need of Christ's anointing and teaching, Rev. iii. 18.

*2dly,* Go to Christ to teach you, Psal. xxv. 5. 'Lead me in thy truth, and teach me.' As one of the disciples said, 'Lord, teach us to pray,' Luke xi. 1. so, Lord, teach me to profit. Do thou light my lamp, O thou great prophet of thy church! Give me a spirit of wisdom and revelation, that I may see things in another manner than ever I saw them before; teach me in the word to hear thy voice, and in the sacrament to discern thy body, Ps. xiii. 3. 'Lighten mine eyes,' &c. *Cathedram habet in cælo qui corda docet in terra.* Aug. "He hath his pulpit in heaven who converts souls." And that we may be encouraged to go to our great prophet:

1. Jesus Christ is very willing to teach us. Why else did he enter into the calling of the ministry, but to teach the mysteries of heaven? Matth. iv. 23. 'Jesus went about teaching and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases among the people.' Why did he take the office prophetic upon him? Why was Christ so angry with them that kept away the key of knowledge? Luke xi. 52. Why was Christ anointed with the Spirit without



measure ? but that he might anoint us with knowledge. Knowledge is in Christ as milk in the breast for the child. O then go to Christ to teach. None in the gospel came to Christ for sight, but he restored their eye-sight ; and sure Christ is more willing to work a cure upon a blind soul, than ever he was upon a blind body.

2. There are none so dull and ignorant but Christ can teach them. Every one is not fit to make a philosopher's scholar of ; *ex omni ligno non fit Mercurius* ; but there is none so dull, but Christ can make a good scholar of such as are ignorant, and of low parts. Christ teacheth them in such a manner, that they know more than the great sages and wise men of the world. Hence that saying of St. Augustine, *furgunt indocti, et rapiunt cælum* ; the unlearned men rise up, and take heaven ; they know the truths of Christ more savingly than the great admired Rabbies. The duller the scholar, the more is his skill seen that teacheth. Hence it is, Christ delights in teaching the ignorant, to get himself more glory, Isa. xxxv. 5. ' The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.' Who would go to teach a blind or a deaf man ? Yet such dull scholars Christ teacheth. Such as are blinded with ignorance, they shall see the mysteries of the gospel, and the deaf ears shall be unstopped.

3. Wait upon the means of grace which Christ hath appointed. Though Christ teacheth by his Spirit, yet he teacheth in the use of ordinances. Wait at the gates of wisdom's door ; ministers are teachers under Christ, Eph. iv. 11. ' Pastors and teachers.' We read of pitchers and lamps within the pitchers, Judges vii. 16. Ministers are earthen vessels, but these pitchers have lamps within them to light souls to heaven. Christ is said to speak to us from heaven now, Heb. xii. 25. *viz.* by his ministers, as the king speaks by his ambassador. Such as wean themselves from the breast of ordinances, seldom thrive ; either they grow light in their head, or lame in their feet. The word preached is Christ's voice in the mouth of the minister ; and they that refuse to hear Christ speaking in the ministry, Christ will refuse to hear them speaking on their death-bed.

4. If you would have the teachings of Christ, walk according to that knowledge which you have already. Use your little knowledge well, and Christ will teach you more, John vii. 17. ' If any man will do his will, he shall know of my doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.' A master seeing his servant improve a little stock well, gives him more to trade with.

Use 3. If you have been taught by Christ savingly, be thankful : it is your honour to have God for your teacher, and that he should teach you, and not others, is matter of admiration

and gratulation. O how many knowing men are ignorant! They are not taught of God; they have Christ's word to enlighten them, but not his Spirit to sanctify them. But that you should have the inward as well as the outward teaching, that Christ should anoint you with the heavenly unction of his Spirit, that you can say as he, John ix. 25. 'One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, I now see.' O how thankful should you be to Christ, who hath revealed his Father's bosom-secrets unto you! John i. 18. 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' If Alexander thought himself so much obliged to Aristotle, for the philosophical instructions he learned from him; O how are we bound to Jesus Christ, this great prophet, for opening to us the eternal purposes of his love, and revealing to us the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven!



### CHRIST'S PRIESTLY OFFICE.

Q. XXXV. *HOW doth Christ execute the office of a priest?*

*Ans.* In his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

HEB. ix. 26. 'Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.'

Q. *What are the parts of Christ's priestly office?*

*Ans.* Christ's priestly office hath two parts, his satisfaction and intercession.

1. His SATISFACTION, and this consists of two branches:  
1. His active obedience, Mat. iii. 15. 'He fulfilled all righteousness.' Christ did every thing which the law required; his holy life was a perfect commentary upon the law of God; and he obeyed the law for us.

2. His passive obedience. Our guilt being transferred and imputed to him, he did undergo the penalty which was due to us; 'he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.' The paschal lamb slain, was a type of Christ who was offered up in sacrifice for us. Sin could not be done away without blood, Heb. ix. 22. 'Without blood is no remission.' Christ was not only a lamb without spot, but a lamb slain.

Q. *Why was it requisite there should be a priest?*

*Ans.* There needed a priest to be an umpire, to mediate between a guilty creature, and an holy God.

Q. *How could Christ suffer, being God?*

*Ans.* Christ suffered only in the human nature.

Q. But if only Christ's humanity suffered, how could this suffering satisfy for sin?

Ans. The human nature being united to the divine, the human nature did suffer, the divine, did satisfy. Christ's Godhead, as it did support the human nature that it did not faint, so it did give virtue to his sufferings. The altar sanctifies the thing offered on it, Matth. xxiii. 19. so the altar of Christ's divine nature sanctified the sacrifice of his death, and made it of infinite value.

Q. Wherein doth the greatness of Christ's sufferings appear?

Ans. In the sufferings of his body. He suffered truly, not only in appearance; the apostle calls it *mors crucis*, the death of the cross, Phil. ii. 8. Tully, when he speaks of this kind of death, *quid dicam in crucem tollere?* Though he was a great orator he wanted words to express it. The thoughts of this made Christ sweat great drops of blood in the garden, Luke xxii. 44. It was an ignominious, painful, cursed death; Christ suffered in all his senses: 1. In his eyes; they beheld two sad objects, he saw his enemies insulting, and his mother weeping. 2. In his ears; his ears were filled with the revilings of the people, Mat. xxvii. 42. 'He saved others, himself he cannot save.' 3. In his smell; when their drivel fell upon his face. 4. In his taste; when they gave him gall and vinegar to drink, bitterness and sharpness. 5. In his feeling; his head suffered with thorns, his hands and feet with the nails,—*Totum pro vulnere corpus*: now was this white lily died of a purple colour. (2.) In the sufferings of his soul. He was pressed in the wine-press of his Father's wrath. This caused that vociferation and out-cry on the cross, 'My God, my God,' *cur dereliquisti?* Christ suffered a double eclipse upon the cross, an eclipse of the sun, and an eclipse of the light of God's countenance. How bitter was this agony! the evangelists use three words to express it, 'he began to be amazed,' Mark xiv. 33. 'He began to be faint.' 'To be exceeding sorrowful,' Mat. xxvi. 37. Christ felt the pains of hell in his soul, though not locally, yet equivalently.

Q. Why did Christ suffer?

Ans. Surely not for any desert of his own, Dan. ix. 26. 'The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself;' it was for us, Isa. liii. 6. *Unus peccat alius plebitur*; he suffered, that he might satisfy God's justice for us. We, by our sins, had infinitely wronged God; and, could we have shed rivers of tears, offered up millions of holocausts and burnt-offerings, we could never have pacified an angry Deity: therefore Christ must die, that God's justice may be satisfied.

It is hotly debated among divines, whether God could not have forgiven sin freely without a sacrifice. Not to dispute



what God could have done, but when we consider God was resolved to have the law satisfied, and to have men saved in a way of justice as well as mercy; then, I say, it was necessary that Christ should lay down his life as a sacrifice.

1. To fulfil the predictions of scripture, Luke xxiv. 46. 'Thus it behoved Christ to suffer.'

2. To bring us into favour with God; It is one thing for a traitor to be pardoned, and another thing to be made a favourite. Christ's blood is not only called a sacrifice whereby God is appeased, but a propitiation whereby God becomes gracious and friendly to us. Christ is our mercy-seat, from which God gives answers of peace to us.

3. Christ died, that he might make good his last-will and testament with his blood: there were many legacies which Christ bequeathed to believers, which had been all null and void, had not he died, and by his death confirmed the will, Heb. ix. 17. A testament is in force after men are dead: the mission of the Spirit, the promises, those legacies, were not in force till Christ's death; but Christ by his blood hath sealed them, and believers may lay claim to them.

4. He died, that he might purchase for us glorious mansions; therefore heaven is called not only a promised, but a 'purchased possession,' Eph. i. 14. Christ died for our preferment; he suffered that we might reign; he hung upon the cross that we might sit upon the throne. Heaven was shut, &c. *crux Christi clavis Paradisi*: the cross of Christ is the ladder by which we ascend to heaven. His crucifixion is our coronation.

*Use 1.* In the bloody sacrifice of Christ, see the horrid nature of sin; sin, it is true, is odious, as it banished Adam out of paradise, and threw the angels into hell; but that which doth most of all make it appear horrid, is this, that it made Christ veil his glory, and lose his blood. We should look upon sin with indignation, and pursue it with an holy malice; and shed the blood of those sins which shed Christ's blood. The sight of Cæsar's bloody robe, incensed the Romans against them that slew him. The sight of Christ's bleeding body should incense us against sin: let us not parley with it; let not that be our joy, which made Christ a man of sorrow.

*Use 2.* Is Christ our priest sacrificed? See God's mercy and justice displayed. I may say as the apostle, Rom. xi. 27. 'Behold the goodness and severity of God.' 1. The goodness of God in providing a sacrifice: had not Christ suffered upon the cross, we must have lain in hell for ever satisfying God's justice.

2. The severity of God: though it were his own Son, the Son of his love, and our sins were but imputed to him, yet God did not spare him, Rom. viii. 32. but his wrath did flame against

him. And if God were thus severe to his own Son, how dreadful will he be one day to his enemies? Such as die in wilful impenitency, must feel the same wrath as Christ did; and because they cannot bear it at once, therefore they must be enduring it for ever.

*Uſe 3.* Is Christ our priest, who was sacrificed for us? Then see the endeared affection of Christ to us sinners. “The cross (saith Austin) was a pulpit, in which Christ preached his love to the world.” That Christ should die, was more than if all the angels had been turned to dust; and that Christ should die as a malefactor, having the weight of all mens sins laid upon him; that he should die for his enemies, Rom. v. 10. The balm-tree weeps out its precious balm, to heal those that cut and mangle it: Christ shed his blood, to heal those that crucified him. And that he should die freely; it is called the ‘offering of the body of Jesus,’ Heb. x. 10. And though his sufferings were so great, that they made him sigh and weep, and bleed; yet they could not make him repent, Isa. liii. 11. ‘He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied.’ Christ had hard travail upon the cross, yet he doth not repent of it, but thinks his sweat and blood well bestowed, because he sees redemption brought forth to the world. O infinite, amazing love of Christ! a love that passeth knowledge! Eph. iii. 19. that neither man nor angel can parallel. How should we be affected with this love? If Saul was so affected with David’s kindness in sparing his life, how should we be affected with Christ’s kindness in parting with his life for us? At Christ’s death and passion, the very stones did cleave asunder, Matth. xxvii. 5. ‘The rocks rent.’ Not to be affected with Christ’s love, in dying, is to have hearts harder than rocks.

*Uſe 4.* Is Christ our sacrifice? then see the excellency of his sacrifice: It is perfect, Heb. x. 4. ‘By one offering he hath perfected them that are sanctified.’ Therefore, how impious are the Papists, in joining their merits, and the prayers of saints with Christ’s sacrifice? They offer him up daily in the mass, as if Christ’s sacrifice on the cross were imperfect: this is a blasphemy against Christ’s priestly office.

2. Christ’s sacrifice is meritorious; he not only died for our example, but to merit salvation; the person who suffered being God as well as man, did put virtue into his sufferings; and now our sins are expiated, and God appeased. No sooner did the messengers say, ‘Uriah is dead,’ but David’s anger was pacified, 2 Sam. xi. 21. No sooner did Christ die, but God’s anger was pacified.

3. This sacrifice is beneficial. Out of the dead lion Samson had honey: it procures justification of our persons, acceptance of our service, access to God with boldness, entrance into the holy place of heaven, Heb. x. 19. *Per latus Christi patefcit*

*nobis in cælum*, Israel passed through the Red-sea to Canaan; so through the Red-sea of Christ's blood, we enter into the heavenly Canaan.

2. *Use Of Exhortation.* Branch 1. Let us fiducially apply this blood of Christ; all the virtue of a medicine is in the applying; though the medicine be made of the blood of God, it will not heal, unless by faith applied. As fire is to the chymist, so is faith to the Christian, the chymist can do nothing without fire, so there is nothing done without faith. Faith makes Christ's sacrifice ours, Phil. iii. 8. 'Christ Jesus my Lord.' It is not gold in the mine, that enricheth, but gold in the hand: faith is the hand that receives Christ's golden merits. It is not a cordial in the flesh, refresheth the spirit, but a cordial drunk down. *Per fidem Christi sanguinem fugimus*, Cypr. Faith opens the orifice of Christ's wounds, and drinks the precious cordial of his blood. Without faith Christ himself will not avail us.

Branch 2. Let us love a bleeding Saviour, and let us show our love to Christ, by being ready to suffer for him. Many rejoice at Christ's suffering for them, but dream not of their suffering for him: Joseph dreamed of his preferment, but not of his imprisonment. Was Christ a sacrifice? Did he bear God's wrath for us? We should bear man's wrath for him. Christ's death was voluntary, Psal. xl. 7. 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.' Luke xii. 50. 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?' Christ calls his sufferings a baptism: he was to be (as it were) baptized in his own blood; and how did he thirst for that time? 'How am I straitened!' O then, let us be willing to suffer for Christ! Christ hath taken away the venom and sting of the saints sufferings: there is no wrath in their cup. Our sufferings Christ can make sweet. As there was oil mixed in the peace-offering, so God can mix the oil of gladness with our sufferings. "The ringing of my chain is sweet music in my ears," *Langreve of Hesse*. Life must be parted with shortly; what is it to part with it a little sooner, as a sacrifice to Christ, as a seal of sincerity, and a pledge of thankfulness?

3d *Use of Consolation.* This sacrifice of Christ's blood may infinitely comfort us. This is the blood of atonement: Christ's cross is *cardo salutis*, Calv. "The hinge and fountain of our comfort."

1st, This blood comforts in case of guilt: O, faith the soul, my sins trouble me! why, Christ's blood was shed for the remission of sin, Mat. xxvi. 28. Let us see our sins laid on Christ, and then they are no more ours, but his.

2dly, In case of pollution: Christ's blood is an healing and cleansing blood: 1. It is healing, Isa. liii. 5. 'With his stripes



we are healed.' It is the best weapon-salve, it heals at a distance: Though Christ be in heaven, we may feel the virtue of his blood healing our bloody issue. 2. And it is cleansing: It is therefore compared to fountain-water, Zech. xiii. 1. The word is a glass to show us our spots, and Christ's blood is a fountain to wash them away; it turns leprosy into purity, 1 John i. 7. 'The blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all our sin.' There is indeed one spot so black, that Christ's blood doth not wash away, viz. the sin against the Holy Ghost. Not but that there is virtue enough in Christ's blood to wash it away; but he who hath sinned that sin will not be washed, he contemns Christ's blood, and tramples it under foot, Heb. x. 29. Thus we see what a strong cordial Christ's blood is; it is the anchor-hold of our faith, the spring of our joy, the crown of our desires, and the only support both in life and death. In all our fears let us comfort ourselves with the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ's blood: Christ died both as a purchaser and as a conqueror: 1. As a purchaser, in regard of God, having by his blood obtained our salvation. 2. And as a conqueror, in regard of Satan, the cross being his triumphant chariot, wherein he hath led hell and death captive.

*Use ult.* Bless God for this precious sacrifice of Christ's death, Ps. ciii. 1. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul.' And for what doth David bless him? 'Who redeemeth thy life from destruction?' Christ gave himself a sin-offering for us, let us give ourselves a thank-offering to him. If a man redeem another out of debt, will not he be grateful? How deeply do we stand obliged to Christ, who hath redeemed us from hell and damnation? Rev. v. 9. 'And they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.' Let our hearts and tongues join in concert to bless God, and let us shew thankfulness to Christ by fruitfulness; let us bring forth (as spice trees) the fruits of humility, zeal, good works. This is to live unto him who died for us, 2 Cor. v. 15. The wise men did not only worship Christ, but presented him with gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, Mat. ii. 11. Let us present Christ, with the fruits of righteousness, which are unto the glory and praise of God.

## CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

ROM. viii. 34. *Who also maketh intercession for us.*

WHEN Aaron entered into the holy place, his bells gave a sound; so Christ having entered into heaven, his intercession makes a melodious sound in the ears of God. Christ, though he be exalted to glory, hath not laid aside his bowels of compassion, but is still mindful of his body mystical; as Joseph was mindful of his father and brethren, when he was exalted to the court. 'Who also maketh intercession for us,'—To intercede, is to make request in the behalf of another. Christ is the great master of requests in heaven; *Christus est catholicus Patris Sacerdos*, Tertul.

Q. *What are the qualifications of our intercessor?*

Ans. 1. He is holy, Heb. vii. 26. 'For such an High-priest became us, who is holy, undefiled, separated from sinners.' 'Christ knew no sin,' 2 Cor. v. 21. He knew no sin in weight, not in the act. It was requisite that he, who was to do away the sins of others should himself be without sin. Holiness is one of the precious stones which shines on the breast-plate of our High-priest.

2. He is faithful, Heb. ii. 17. 'It behoved him to be like unto his brethren, that he might be a faithful High-priest.' Moses was faithful as a servant, Christ as a Son, Heb. iii. 5. He doth not forget any cause he hath to plead, nor doth he use any deceit in pleading. An ordinary attorney may either leave out some word which might make for the client, or put in a word against him, having received a fee on both sides; but Christ is true to the cause he pleads: we may leave our matters with him, we may trust our lives and souls in his hand.

3. He never dies. The priests under the law, while their office lived, they themselves died, Heb. vii. 23. 'They were not suffered to continue by reason of death:' But 'Christ ever lives to make intercession,' Heb. viii. 25. He hath no succession in his priesthood.

Q. *Who Christ intercedes for?*

Ans. Not for all promiscuously, John xvii. 9. but for the elect. 'The efficacy of Christ's prayer reacheth no further than the efficacy of his blood; but his blood was shed only for the elect, therefore his prayers only reach them. The high-priest went into the sanctuary with the names only of the twelve tribes upon his breast; so Christ goes into heaven only with the names of the elect upon his breast. Christ intercedes for the weakest

believers, John xvii. 20. and for all the sins of believers. In the law there were some sins the high-priest was neither to offer sacrifice for, nor yet to offer prayer, Numb. xv. 30. 'The soul that doth ought presumptuously shall be cut off.' The priest might offer up prayer for sins of ignorance, but not of presumption: but Christ's intercession extends to all the sins of the elect. Of what a bloody colour was David's sin? yet it did not exclude Christ's intercession.

*Q. What doth Christ in the work of intercession?*

*Ans.* Three things.

1. He presents the merit of his blood to his Father, and, in the virtue of that price paid, pleads for mercy. The high-priest was herein a lively type of Christ: Aaron was to do four things: 1. Kill the beasts: 2. To enter with the blood into the holy of holies: 3. To sprinkle the mercy-seat with the blood: 4. To kindle the incense, and with the smoke of it, cause a cloud arise over the mercy-seat; and so the atonement was made, Lev. xvi. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. Christ our high-priest did exactly answer to this type: he was offered up in sacrifice, that answers to the priest's killing the bullock: and Christ is gone up into heaven, that answers to the priest's going in to the holy of holies; and he spreads his blood before his Father, that answers to the priest's sprinkling the blood upon the mercy-seat: and he prays to his Father, that for his blood's sake, he would be propitious to sinners; that answers to the cloud of incense going up: and through his intercession God is pacified, that answers to the priest's making atonement.

2. Christ, by his intercession, answers all bills of indictment brought in against the elect. Believers, do what they can, sin, and then Satan accuseth them to God, and conscience accuseth them to themselves: now, Christ by his intercession, answers all these accusations, Rom. viii. 33. 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is Christ that maketh intercession for us.' When Esculus was accused for some impiety, his brother stood up for him, and shewed the magistrates how he had lost his hand in the service of the state, and so obtained his pardon: thus, when Satan accuseth the saints, or when the justice of God lays any thing to their charge, Christ shews his own wounds, and by virtue of his bloody sufferings, he answers all the demands and challenges of the law, and counterworks Satan's accusations.

3. Christ, by his intercession, calls for acquittance; Lord, let the sinner be absolved from guilt: and in this sense Christ is called an advocate, 1 John ii. 1. He requires that the sinner be set free in the court. An advocate differs much from an orator; an orator useth rhetoric to persuade and intreat the judge to shew mercy to another: but an advocate tells the judge



what is law. Thus Christ appears in heaven as an advocate, he represents what is law : when God's justice opens the debt-book, Christ opens the law book : Lord, saith he, thou art a just God, and wilt not be pacified without blood ; lo, here the blood is shed, therefore, in justice, give me a discharge of these distressed creatures : it is equal, that the law being satisfied, the sinner should be acquitted. And, upon Christ's plea, God sets his hand to the sinner's pardon.

*Q. In what manner Christ intercedes ?*

*Ans. 1. Freely :* he pleads our cause in heaven, and takes no fee. An ordinary lawyer will have his fee, and sometimes a bribe too : but Christ is not mercenary : how many causes doth he plead every day in heaven, and will take nothing ? As Christ laid down his life freely, John x. 15, 18. so he intercedes freely.

*2. Feelingly :* he is as sensible of our condition as his own, Heb. vi. 15. ' We have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmity.' As a tender-hearted mother would plead with a judge for a child ready to be condemned ; O how would her bowels work ! how would her tears trickle down ! what weeping rhetoric would she use to the judge for mercy ! Thus the Lord Jesus is full of sympathy and tenderness, Heb. ii. 17. that he might be a merciful high-priest : though he hath left his passion, yet not his compassion. An ordinary lawyer is not affected with the cause he pleads, nor doth he care which way it goes ; it is profit makes him plead, not affection : But Christ intercedes feelingly : and that which makes him intercede with affection is, it is his own cause which he pleads. He hath shed his blood to purchase life and salvation for the elect ; and if they should not be saved, he would lose his purchase.

*2. Efficaciously :* It is a prevailing intercession. Christ never lost any cause he pleaded, he was never non-suited. Christ's intercession, must needs be effectual, if you consider,

(1.) The excellency of his person. If the prayer of a saint be so prevalent with God, (Moses' prayer did bind God's hand, Exod. xxxii. 10. ' Let me alone : ' And Jacob as a prince, prevailed with God, Gen. xxxii. 28. And Elijah did by prayer open and shut heaven, James v. 17.) Then what is Christ's prayer ? He is the Son of God, the Son in whom he is well pleased, Matth. iii. 17. What will not a father grant a son ? John xi. 42. ' I know that thou always hearest me.' If God could forget that Christ were a priest, yet he cannot forget that he is a son.

(2.) Christ prays for nothing but what his Father hath a mind to grant. There is but one will between Christ and his Father : Christ prays, ' Sanctify them through thy truth ; ' and ' This

is the will of God, even your sanctification,' 1 Theff. iv. 3. So then, if Christ prays for nothing but what God the Father hath a mind to grant, then he is like to speed.

(3.) Christ prays for nothing but what he hath power to give: what he prays for as he is man, that he hath power to give as he is God, John xvii. 24. 'Father, I will'—*Father*, there he prays as a man; *I will*, there he gives as God. This is a great comfort to a believer, when his prayer is weak, and he can hardly pray for himself, Christ's prayer in heaven is mighty and powerful. Though God may refuse prayer as it comes from us, yet not as it comes from Christ.

4. Christ's intercession is always ready at hand. The people of God have sins of daily incurſion; and, besides these, sometimes they lapse into great sins, and God is provoked, and his justice is ready to break forth upon them; But Christ's intercession is ready at hand; he daily makes up the breaches between God and them; he presents the merits of his blood to his Father, to pacify him. When the wrath of God began to break out upon Israel, Aaron presently stepped in with his censer, and offered incense, and so the plague was stayed, Numb. xvi. 47. so; no sooner doth a child of God offend, and God begin to be angry, but immediately Christ steps in and intercedes: Father, it is my child hath offended; though he hath forgotten his duty, thou hast not lost thy bowels: O pity him, and let thy anger be turned away from him. Christ's intercession is ready at hand; and, upon the least failings of the godly, he stands up and makes request for them in heaven.

Q. *What are the fruits of Christ's intercession?*

Ans. 1. *Justification.* In justification there are two things: 1. Guilt is remitted. 2. Righteousness is imputed, Jer. xxiii. 6. 'The Lord our righteousness.' We are reputed not only righteous, as the angels, but as Christ, having his robes put upon us, 2 Cor. v. 21. But whence is it that we are justified? It is from Christ's intercession, Rom. viii. 33, 34. Lord, saith Christ, these are the persons I have died for; look upon them as if they had not sinned, and repute them righteous.

2d Fruit. The unction of the Spirit, 1 John ii. 20. 'Ye have an unction from the holy One.' This unction or anointing is nothing else but the work of sanctification in the heart, whereby the Spirit makes us partake of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. Such as speak of the Philosopher's stone, suppose it to have such a property; that when it toucheth the metal; it turns it into gold: Such a property hath the Spirit of God upon the soul; when it toucheth the soul, it puts it into a divine nature, it makes it to be holy, and to resemble God. The sanctifying work of the Spirit is the fruit of Christ's intercession, John vii.

39. 'The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.' Christ being glorified, and in heaven, now he prays the Father, and the Father sends the Spirit, who pours out the holy anointing upon the elect.

*3d Fruit.* The purification of our holy things. It is Christ's work in heaven, not only to present his own prayers to his Father, but he prays over our prayers again, Rev. viii. 3. 'Another angel came, having a golden censer, and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar.' This angel was Christ; he takes the golden censer of his merits, and puts our prayers into this censer, and with the incense of his intercession makes our prayers go up as a sweet perfume in heaven. It is observable, Lev. xvi. 16. 'Aaron shall make atonement for the holy place.' This was typical, to shew that our holy duties need to have atonement made for them. Our best services, as they come from us, are mixed with corruption, as wine that tastes of the cask, Isa. lxiv. 6. 'They are filthy rags;' but Christ purifies and sweetens these services, mixing the sweet odours of his intercession with them; and now God accepts and crowns them. What would become of our duties without an high-priest? Christ's intercession doth, to our prayers, as the fan to the chaff, it winnows it from the corn; so Christ winnows out the chaff which intermixeth with our prayers.

*4th Fruit.* Access with boldness unto the throne of grace, Heb. iv. 16. We have a great High-priest that is passed into the heavens, let us go; come boldly to the throne of grace; we have a friend at court that speaks a good word for us, and is following our cause in heaven, therefore let this animate and encourage us in prayer. We think it too much boldness; what? such sinners as we to come for pardon! we shall be denied; this is a sinful modesty: did we indeed come in our name in prayer, it were presumption, but Christ intercedes for us in the force and efficacy of his blood: Now, to be afraid to come to God in prayer, is a dishonour to Christ's intercession.

*5th Fruit.* The sending the Comforter, John xiv. 16. 'I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter.' The comfort of the Spirit is distinct from the anointing; this comfort is very sweet, sweeter than the honey-drops from the comb; it is the manna in the golden pot, it is *vinum in pectore*; a drop of this heavenly comfort is enough to sweeten a sea of worldly sorrow: it is called the 'earnest of the Spirit,' 2 Cor. i. 22. an earnest assures one of the whole sum. The Spirit gives us an earnest of heaven in our hand. Whence is this comforting work of the Spirit? Thank Christ's intercession for it: 'I will pray the Father, and he shall send the Comforter.'

*6th Fruit.* Perseverance in grace, John xvii. 11. 'Keep



through thine own name those which thou hast given me.' It is not our prayer, or watchfulness, or grace that keeps us, but it is God's care and manutenance; he holds us, that we do not fall away. And whence is it God preserves us? It is from Christ's intercession; 'Father keep them.' That prayer of Christ for Peter, is the copy of his prayer now in heaven, Luke xxii. 32. 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Peter's faith did fail in some degree, when he denied Christ; but Christ prayed that it might not totally fail. The saints persevere in believing, because Christ perseveres in praying.

*7th Fruit.* Absolution at the day of judgment. Christ shall judge the world, John v. 22. 'God hath committed all judgment to the Son.' Now sure; those that Christ hath so prayed for, he will absolve when he sits upon the bench of judicature. Will Christ condemn those he prays for? Believers are his spouse, will he condemn his spouse?

*Use 1. Branch 1.* See here the constancy of Christ's love to the elect. He did not only die for them, but intercedes for them in heaven; when Christ hath done dying, he hath not done loving: he is now at work in heaven for the saints, he carries their names on his breast, and will never leave praying till that prayer be granted, John xvii. 24. 'Father, I will, that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.'

*Branch 2.* See whence it is that the prayers of the saints are so powerful with God. Jacob, as an angel, prevailed with God: Moses' prayer tied God's hands; *Precibus suis tanquam vinquam vinculis ligatum tenuit Deum*; 'Let me alone,' Exod. xxxii. 10. Whence is this? It is Christ's prayer in heaven makes the saints prayers so available. Christ's divine nature is the altar on which he offers up our prayers, and so they prevail: prayer, as it comes from the saints is but weak and languid; but when the arrow of a saint's prayer is put into the bow of Christ's intercession, now it pierceth the throne of grace.

*Branch 3.* It shews where a Christian must chiefly fix his eye when he comes to prayer, viz. on Christ's intercession. We are to look up to the mercy-seat, but to hope for mercy through Christ's intercession. We read, Lev. vi. that Aaron made the atonement as well by the incense as by the blood: We must look to the cloud of incense, viz. the intercession of Christ. Christian, look up to thy advocate, one that God can deny nothing to: a word from Christ's mouth is more, than if all the angels in heaven were interceding for thee. If a man had a suit depending in the court of chancery, and had a skilful lawyer to plead, this would much encourage him. Christ is now at the court appearing for us, Heb. ix. 24. and he hath great potency in heaven: this should much encourage us to look up to him, and hope for audience in prayer. We might

indeed be afraid to present our petitions, if we had not Christ to deliver them.

*Branch 4.* The sad condition of an unbeliever; he hath none in heaven to speak a word for him, John xvii. 9. 'I pray not for the world;' as good be shut out of heaven, as be shut out of Christ's prayer. Christ pleads for the saints, as queen Esther did for the Jews, when they should have been destroyed; 'Let my people be given me at my request,' Esth. vii. 3. When the devil shews the blackness of their sins, Christ shews the redness of his wounds. But how sad is the condition of that man, Christ will not pray for, nay, that he will pray against? As queen Esther petitioned against Haman, and then his face was covered, Esth. vii. 6. and he was led away to execution. It is sad when the law shall be against the sinner, and conscience, and judge, and no friend to speak a word for him: there is no way, then, but, jailor, take the prisoner.

*Branch 5.* If Christ makes intercession, then we have nothing to do with other intercessors. The church of Rome distinguisheth between mediators of redemption and intercession, and say, the angels do not redeem us, but intercede for us: and pray to them: but Christ only can intercede for us *ex officio*. God hath consecrated him an high-priest, Heb. v. 9. 'Thou art a priest for ever.' Christ intercedes *vi pretii*, in the virtue of his blood, he pleads his merits to his Father; the angels have no merits to bring to God, therefore can be no intercessors for us; whoever is our advocate must be our propitiation to pacify God, 1 John ii. 1. 'We have an advocate with the Father, v. 2. And he is our propitiation.' The angels cannot be our propitiation, therefore not our advocates.

*2d Use of trial.* How shall we know that Christ intercedes for us? They have little ground to think Christ prays for them, who never pray for themselves: well, but how shall we know?

*Ans.* 1. If Christ be praying for us, then his Spirit is praying in us, Gal. iv. 6. 'He hath sent forth his Spirit into your heart, crying, Abba, Father;' and Rom. viii. 26. the Spirit helps us with sighs and groans; not only with gifts but groans. We need not climb up into the firmament to see if the sun be there, we may see the beauty of it upon the earth; so we need not go up into heaven to see if Christ be there interceding for us; let us look into our hearts, if they are quickened and inflamed in prayer, and we can cry, Abba, Father: By this interceding of the Spirit within us, we may know Christ is interceding above for us.

*Ans.* 2. If we are given to Christ then he intercedes for us, John xvii. 9. 'I pray for them whom thou hast given me:'

'tis one thing for Christ to be given to us, another for us to be given to Christ.

*Q. How know you that?*

*Ans.* If thou art a believer, then thou art one given to Christ, and he prays for thee: faith is an act of recumbency, we do rest on Christ, as the stones in the building rest upon the corner-stone. Faith throws itself into Christ's arms; it saith, Christ is my priest, his blood is my sacrifice, his divine nature is my altar, and here I rest. This faith is seen by the effects of it, a refining work, and a resigning work: it purifies the heart, and there is the refining work; it makes a deed of gift to Christ, it gives up its use, its love to him, 1 Cor. vi. 19. there is the resigning work of faith. These that believe are given to Christ, and have a part in his prayer, John xvii. 20. 'Nor do I pray for these alone, but for all them that shall believe on me.'

*3d Use of exhortation. Branch 1.* It, stirs us up to several duties: 1. If Christ appears for us in heaven, then we must appear for him upon earth: Christ is not ashamed to carry our names on his breast, and shall we be ashamed of his truth? Doth he plead our cause, and shall we not stand up in his cause? What a mighty argument is this to stand up for the honour of Christ in times of apostasy? Christ is interceding for us: doth he present our names in heaven, and shall not we profess his name on earth:

*Branch 2.* If Christ lays out all his interest for us at the throne of grace, we must lay out all our interest for him, Phil. i. 20. 'That Christ may be magnified.' Trade your talents for Christ's glory; there's no man but hath some talent to trade, one parts, another estate: Oh trade for Christ's glory! spend and be spent for him: let your head study for Christ, your hands work for Christ, your tongue speak for him; if Christ be an advocate for us in heaven, we must be factors for him on earth, every one in his sphere must act vigorously for Christ.

*Branch 3.* Believe in this glorious intercession of Christ! That he now intercedes for us, and that for his sake God will accept us: in the text, 'Who maketh intercession for us.' If we believe not, we dishonour Christ's intercession. If a poor sinner may not go to Christ as his High-priest, believing in his intercession, then are we Christians in a worse condition under the gospel, than the Jews were under the law: they, when they had sinned, had their high-priest to make atonement; and shall not we have our high-priest? is not Christ our Aaron, who presents his blood and incense before the mercy-seat? O look up by faith to Christ's intercession! Christ did not only pray for his disciples and apostles, but for the weakest believer.

*Branch 4.* Love your intercessor, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema.' Kind-



ness invites love; had you a friend at court, who, when you were questioned for delinquency or debt, should plead with the judge for you, and bring you off your troubles, would you not love that friend? So it is here, how oft doth Satan put in his bills against us in the court? Now Christ is at the judge's hand, he sits at his Father's right hand, ever to plead for us, and to make our peace with God: O how should our hearts be fired with love to Christ! Love him with a sincere and superlative love, above estate, relation; *Bern. Plusquam tua, tuos.* And our fire of love should be as fire on the altar, never to go out, Lev. vi. 13.

*4th Use, of comfort to believers.* Christ is at work for you in heaven, he makes intercession for you. Oh! but I am afraid Christ does not intercede for me.

*Q. I am a sinner; who doth Christ intercede for?*

*Ans.* Isa. liii. 12. 'He made intercession for the transgressors.' Did Christ open his sides for thee, and will he not open his mouth to plead for thee?

*Q. But I have offended my high-priest, by distrusting his blood, abusing his love, grieving his Spirit; and will he ever pray for me?*

*Ans.* Which of us may not say so? But, Christian, dost thou mourn for unbelief? Be not discouraged, thou mayest have a part in Christ's prayer. Numb. xvi. 'The congregation murmured against Aaron;' yet, though they had sinned against their high-priest, ver. 46. 'Aaron ran in with his censer, and stood between the dead and the living.' If so much bowels in Aaron, who was but a type of Christ, how much more bowels are in Christ, who will pray for them who have sinned against their high-priest? Did not he pray for them that crucified him, 'Father, forgive them?'

*Q. But I am unworthy; what am I, that Christ should intercede for me?*

*Ans.* The work of Christ's intercession is a work of free grace; Christ's praying for us, is from his pitying of us; Christ looks not at our worthiness, but our wants.

*Q. But I am followed with sad temptations?*

*Ans.* But, though Satan tempts, Christ prays, and Satan shall be vanquished; though thou mayest lose a single battle, yet not the victory: Christ prays that thy faith fail not; therefore, Christians, say, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul?' Christ intercedes, it is man that sins, it is God that prays; the Greek word for advocate, signifies comforter. This is a sovereign comfort; Christ makes intercession.

## CHRIST'S KINGLY OFFICE.

Q. XXVI. *HOW doth Christ execute the office of a king?*

A. In subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Now of Christ's regal office, Rev. xix. 16. 'And he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.'

Jesus Christ is of mighty renown, he is a king; he hath a kingly title, 'High and Mighty,' Isa. lvii. 15. 2. He hath his *insignia regalia* his ensigns of royalty, *corona est insigne regie potestatis*: His crown, Rev. vi. 2. His sword, Psalm xlv. 3. 'Gird thy sword upon thy thigh.' His sceptre, Heb. i. 8. 'A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.' 3. His *escutcheon*, or coat-armour; he gives the lion in his arms, Rev. v. 5. 'The lion of the tribe of Judah.' And he is, the text saith, 'King of kings.' He hath a pre-eminence of all other kings, he is called, 'the Prince of the kings of the earth,' Rev. i. 5. He must needs be so, for, 'by him kings reign,' Prov. viii. 13. They hold their crowns by immediate tenure from this great king. Christ infinitely outvies all other princes; he hath the highest throne, the largest dominions, and the longest possession, Heb. i. 8. 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.' Christ hath many heirs, but no successors. Well may he be called King of kings, for he hath an unlimited power; the power of other kings is limited, but Christ's power is unlimited, Psal. cxxxv. 6. 'Whatsoever he pleased, that did he, in heaven and earth, and in the sea.' Christ's power is as large as his will. The angels take the oath of allegiance to him, Heb. i. 6. 'Let all the angels of God worship him.'

Q. *How Christ comes to be King?*

A. Not by usurpation, but legally? Christ holds his crown by immediate tenure from heaven. God the Father hath decreed him to be king, Psal. ii. 5, 6. 'I have set my king upon my holy hill: I will declare the decree.' God hath anointed and sealed him to his regal office, John vi. 27. 'Him hath God the Father sealed.' God hath set the crown upon his head.

Q. *In what sense is Christ king?*

A. Two ways, 1. In reference to his people. And, 2. In reference to his enemies.

1. In reference to his people: (1.) To govern them. It was prophesied of Christ before he was born, Mat. ii. 6. 'And thou, Bethlehem, art not the least among the princes of Judah;

for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel.' It is a vain thing for a king to have a crown on his head, unless he have a sceptre in his hand to rule.

Q. *Where doth Christ rule?*

A. His kingdom is spiritual: He rules in the hearts of men. He sets up his throne where no other king doth, he rules the will and affections, his power binds the conscience: he subdues men's lusts, Mic. vii. 19. 'He will subdue our iniquities.'

Q. *What doth Christ rule by?*

A. By *law*, and by *love*; 1. He rules by law. It is one of the *jura regalia*, the flowers of the crown to enact laws; Christ as king makes laws, and by his laws he rules: the law of faith, 'believe in the Lord Jesus;' the law of sanctity, 1 Pet. i. 15. 'Be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' Many would admit Christ to be their advocate to plead for them, but not their king to rule them.

2. He rules by love: he is a king full of mercy and clemency; as he hath a sceptre in his hand, so an olive branch of peace in his mouth. Though he be the Lion of the tribe of Judah for majesty, yet the Lamb of God for meekness. His regal rod hath honey at the end of it. He sheds abroad his love into the hearts of his subjects; he rules them with promises as well as precepts. This makes all his subjects become volunteers; they are willing to pay their allegiance to him, Plal. cx. 3. 'Thy people shall be a willing people.'

(2.) Christ is a king to defend his people: as Christ hath a sceptre to rule them, so a shield to defend them, Ps. iii. 3. 'Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me.' When Antiochus did rage furiously against the Jews, he took away the vessels of the Lord's house, set up an idol in the temple; then this great king, called Michael, did stand up for them to defend them, Dan. xii. 1. Christ preserves his church as a spark in the ocean, as a flock of sheep among wolves. That the sea should be higher than the earth, and yet not drown it, is a wonder: so, that the wicked should be so much higher than the church in power, and not devour it, is, because Christ hath this inscription on his vesture and his thigh, KING OF KINGS; Ps. cxxiv. 2. 'If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, they had swallowed us up.' They say, lions are *insomnes*, they have little or no sleep; it is true of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, he never slumbers nor sleeps, but watcheth over his church to defend it: Isa. xxvii. 2, 3. 'Sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine; I the Lord do keep it, lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.' If the enemies destroy the church, it must be at a time when it is neither night nor day, for Christ keeps it day and night. Christ is said to carry his church, as the eagle her young ones upon her wings, Exod. xix. 4. The



arrow must first hit the eagle before it can hurt the young ones, and shoot through her wings: the enemies must first strike through Christ, before they can destroy his church. Let the wind and storms be up, and the church almost covered with waves, yet Christ is in the ship of the church, and so long there is no danger of shipwreck. Nor will Christ only defend his church, as he is king, but deliver it, 2 Tim. iv. 17. 'He delivered me out of the mouth of the lion,' viz. Nero. 2 Cor. xi. 14. 'The Lord saved them by a great deliverance.' Sometimes Christ is said to command deliverance, Ps. lxiv. 4. Sometimes to create deliverance, Isa. xlv. 18. Christ as a king commands deliverance, and as a God creates it. And deliverance shall come in his time. Isa. lx. 22. 'I the Lord will hasten it in his time.'

*Q. When is the time that this King will deliver his people?*

*A.* When the hearts of his people are humblest, when their prayers are ferventest, when their faith is strongest, when their forces are weakest, when their enemies are highest, now is the usual time that Christ puts forth his kingly power in their deliverance, Isa. xxxiii. 2, 8, 9.

3. Christ is a king to reward his people, there's nothing lost by serving this king: 1. He rewards his subjects in this life: 1st, He gives them inward peace and joy; a bunch of grapes by the way; and oftentimes riches and honour. 'Godliness hath the promise of this life,' 1 Tim. iv. 8. These are, as it were, the saints vails. But besides the great reward is to come, 'An eternal weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv. 17. Christ makes all his subjects kings, Rev. ii. 10. 'I will give thee a crown of life.' This crown will be full of jewels, and it will 'never fade,' 1 Pet. v. 5.

2. Christ is a king in reference of his enemies, in subduing and conquering them: he pulls down their pride, befools their policy, restrains their malice. That stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which smote the image, Dan. ii. 34. was an emblem, saith Austin, of Christ's monarchical power, conquering and triumphing over his enemies. Christ will make his enemies his footstool, Ps. cx. 1. He can destroy them with ease, 2 Chron. xiv. 11. 'It is nothing for thee, Lord, to help.' He can do it with weak means, without means. He can make the enemies destroy themselves; he set the Persians against the Grecians: and, 2 Chron. xx. 22. the children of Ammon helped to destroy one another. Thus Christ is king in vanquishing the enemies of his church.

This is a great ground of comfort to the church of God in the midst of all the combinations of the enemy, 'Christ is king;' and he can not only bound the enemies power, but break it. The church hath more with her, than against her,

he hath Emmanuel on her side, even that great KING to whom all knees must bend.

Christ is called 'a man of war,' Exod. xv. 3. he understands all the policy of chivalry; he is described with seven eyes and seven horns, Rev. v. 6. The seven eyes are to discern the conspiracies of his enemies, and the seven horns are to push and vex his enemies.

Christ is described with a crown and a bow, Rev. vi. 2. 'He that sat on the white horse had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.' A crown is an ensign of his kingly office, and the bow is to shoot his enemies to death.

Christ is described with a vesture dipt in blood, Rev. xix. 13. He hath a golden sceptre to rule his people, but an iron rod to break his enemies, Rev. xvii. 12, 14. 'The ten horns thou sawest are ten kings; these shall make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is the King of kings.' The enemies may set up their standard, but Christ will set up his trophies at last, Rev. xiv. 18, 19. 'And the angel gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God, and the wine-press was trodden, and blood came out of the wine-press.' The enemies of Christ shall be but as so many clusters of ripe grapes, to be cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God, and to be trodden by Christ till their blood came out. Christ will at last come off victor, and all his enemies shall be put under his feet; *gaudeo quod Christus Dominus est alioqui desperassem*, "I am glad Christ reigns, else I should have despaired:" said Miconius in an epistle to Calvin.

*Use 1. Branch 1.* See hence, it is no disparagement to serve Christ: he is a king, and it is no dishonour to be employed in a king's service. Some are apt to reproach the saints for their piety; they serve the Lord Christ, he who hath this inscription upon his vesture, KING OF KINGS. Theodosius thought it a greater honour to be a servant of Christ, than the head of an empire, *Servire est regnare*. Christ's servants are called vessels of honour, 2 Tim. ii. 21. and a royal nation, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Serving of Christ ennobles us with dignity: it is a greater honour to serve Christ, than to have kings serve us.

*Branch 2.* If Christ be king, it informs us, that all matters of fact must one day be brought before him. Christ hath *Jus vitæ et necis*, the power of life and death in his hand, John v. 22. 'The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.' He who once hung upon the cross, shall sit upon the bench of judicature: kings must come before him to be judged; they who once sat upon the throne, must appear at the bar. God hath committed all judgment to the Son, and Christ is the high-

est court of judicature ; if this king once condemns men, there is no appeal to any other court.

*Branch 3.* See whither we are to go, when we are foiled by corruption ; go to Christ, he is king ; desire him, by his kingly power, to subdue thy corruptions, to bind these kings with chains, Pl. cxlix. 8. We are apt to say of our sins, ' These sons of Zeruiah will be strong for us : ' we shall never overcome this pride and infidelity : ay, but go to Christ, he is king ; though our lusts are too strong for us, yet not for Christ to conquer : he can by his Spirit break the power of sin. Joshua, when he had conquered five kings, caused his servants to set their feet on the necks of those kings ; so Christ can and will set his feet on the necks of our lusts,

*2d Use, of caution :* Is Christ King of kings ? Let all great ones take heed how they employ their power against Christ : Christ gives them their power, and if this power shall be made use of for the suppressing of his kingdom, and ordinances, their account will be heavy. God hath laid the key of Government upon Christ's shoulders, Isa. ix. 7. and to go to oppose Christ in his kingly office, it is as if the thorns should set themselves in battalia against the fire, or a child fight with an archangel. Christ's sword on his thigh is able to avenge all his quarrels : it is not good to stir a lion ; let no man provoke the ' Lion of the tribe of Judah, whose eyes are as a lamp of fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him,' Nah. i. 6. ' He shall cut off the spirit of princes,' Psal. lxxvi, 13.

*Use 3.* If Christ be a great king, submit to him. Say not, as those Jews, ' We have no king but Cæsar,' no king but our lusts. This is to chuse the bramble to rule over you, and ' out of the bramble will come forth a fire,' Judg. ix. Submit to Christ willingly : all the devils in hell submit to Christ, but it is against their will ; they are his slaves, not his subjects. Submit cheerfully to Christ's person and his laws. Many would have Christ their Saviour, but not their Prince ; such as will not have Christ to be their king to rule them, shall never have his blood to save them. Obey all Christ's princely commands ; if he commands love, humility, good works, be as the needle which points which way soever the loadstone draws.

*Branch 2.* Let such admire God's free grace, who were once under the power and tyranny of Satan, and now Christ hath made them, of slaves, to become the subjects of his kingdom. Christ did not need subjects, he hath legions of angels ministering to him ; but in his love, he hath honoured you to make you his subjects. O how long was it ere Christ could prevail with you to come under his banner ! how much opposition did he meet with, ere you would wear this Prince's colours ? But at last omnipotent grace overcame you. When Peter was sleep-



ing between two soldiers, an angel came and beat off his chains, Acts xli. 7. so, when thou wert sleeping in the devil's arms, that Christ should, by his Spirit, smite thy heart, and cause the chains of sin to fall off, and make thee a subject of his kingdom: O admire free grace! Thou who art a subject of Christ, art sure to reign with Christ for ever.



## CHRIST'S HUMILIATION IN HIS INCARNATION.

1 TIM. iii. 16. *Great is the mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh.*

Q. XXVII. *WHEREIN did Christ's humiliation consist?*

*Ans.* In his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross.

Christ's humiliation consisted in his incarnation, his taking flesh, and being born. It was real flesh Christ took: not the image of a body (as the Manichees erroneously held) but a true body; therefore Christ is said to be 'made of a woman,' Gal. iv. 4. As the bread is made of the wheat, and the wine is made of the grape; so Christ is made of a woman, his body was part of the flesh and substance of the virgin. This is a glorious mystery, 'God manifest in the flesh.' In the creation, man was made in God's image; in the incarnation, God was made in man's image.

Q. *How came it about that Christ was made flesh?*

*Ans.* It was by his Father's special designation, Gal. iv. 4. 'God sent forth his Son made of a woman.' God the Father did, in a special manner, appoint Christ to be incarnate; which shews how needful a call is, to any business of weight and importance: to act without a call, is to act without a blessing. Christ himself would not be incarnate, and take upon him the work of a Mediator till he had a call. 'God sent forth his Son made of a woman.'

Q. *But was there no other way for the restoring of fallen man but this, that God should take flesh?*

*Ans.* We must not ask a reason of God's will; it is dangerous to pry into God's ark: we are not to dispute but adore. The wise God saw this the best way for our redemption, that Christ should be incarnate; it was not fit for any to satisfy God's justice, but man; none could do it but God; therefore, Christ being both God and man, he is the fittest to undertake this work of redemption.

Q. *Why was Christ born of a woman?*

*Ans.* 1. That God might fulfil that promise, Gen. iii. 15. 'The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head.' 2. Christ was born of a woman that he might roll away that reproach from the woman, which she had contracted by being seduced by the serpent. Christ, in taking his flesh from the woman, hath honoured her sex; that as at the first the woman had made man a sinner, so now, to make him amends, she should bring him a Saviour.

*Q.* *Why was Christ born of a virgin?*

*Ans.* 1. For decency: it became not God to have any mother but a maid, and it became not a maid to have any other son but a God.

2. For necessity: Christ was to be an high-priest, most pure and holy. Had he been born after the ordinary course of nature, he had been defiled; (all that spring out of Adam's loins have a tincture of sin) but, that 'Christ's substance might remain pure and immaculate,' he was born of a virgin.

3. To answer the type. Melchisedec was a type of Christ; he is said to be 'without father and without mother.' Christ being born of a virgin, answered the type: he was without father and without mother: without mother as he was God, without father, as he was man.

*Q.* *How could Christ be made of the flesh and blood of a virgin yet without sin? The purest virgin that is, her soul is stained with original sin.*

*Ans.* This knot the scripture unties, Luke i. 35. 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and overshadow thee: therefore that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.' 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,' that is, the Holy Ghost did consecrate and purify that part of the virgin's flesh whereof Christ was made. As the alchymist extracts and draws away the dross from the gold, so the Holy Ghost did refine and clarify that part of the virgin's flesh separating it from sin. Though the virgin Mary herself had sin, yet, that part of the flesh, whereof Christ was made, was without sin; otherwise it must have been an impure conception.

*Q.* *What is meant by the power of the Holy Ghost overshadowing the virgin?*

*Ans.* Basil saith, "It was the Holy Ghost's blessing the flesh of that virgin, whereof Christ was formed." But there is a further mystery in it; the Holy Ghost having framed Christ in the virgin's womb, did, in a wonderful manner, unite Christ's human nature to his divine, and so of both made one person. This is a mystery, which the angels pry into with adoration.

*Q.* *When was Christ incarnate?*

*Ans.* In the fulness of time, Gal. iv. 4. 'When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman.'

By the fulness of time, we must understand *tempus a patre præfinitum*; so Ambrose, Luther, *Corn. a Lap.* the determinate time that God had set. More particularly, this fulness of time was when all the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah were accomplished; and all legal shadows and figures, whereby he was typified, were abrogated: 'in the fulness of time God sent his Son.' And, by the way, observe, this may comfort us, in regard of the church of God, though at present we do not see that peace and purity in the church, as we could desire, yet in the fulness of time, when God's time is come, and mercy is ripe, then shall deliverance spring up, and God will come riding upon the chariots of salvation: 'When the fulness of time was come, then God sent forth his Son made of a woman.'

Q. *Why was Jesus Christ made flesh?*

Ans. 1. The *causa prima*, and impulsive cause, was free grace; it was love in God the Father to send Christ, and love in Christ that he came to be incarnate. Love was the intrinsecal motive. Christ is God-man, because he is a lover of man. Christ came out of pity and indulgence to us; *non merita nostra, sed misera nostra*, Aug. Not our deserts, but our misery made Christ take flesh. Christ's taking flesh, was a plot of free grace, and a pure design of love. God himself, though Almighty, was overcome with love. Christ incarnate is nothing but love covered with flesh. Christ's assuming our human nature, as it was a master-piece of wisdom, so a monument of free-grace.

2. Christ took our flesh upon him, that he might take our sins upon him. He was, saith Luther, *maximus peccatur*, the greatest sinner, having the weight of the sins of the whole world lying upon him. He took our flesh that he might take our sins, and so appease God's wrath.

3. Christ took our flesh, that he might make the human nature appear lovely to God, and the divine nature appear lovely to man.

(1.) That he might make the human nature lovely to God. Upon our fall from God, our nature became odious to him; no vermin is so odious to us, as the human nature was to God. When once our virgin nature was become sinful, it was like flesh imposthumated, or running into sores, loathsome to behold: such was our nature, when corrupt, odious to God, he could not endure to look upon us. Now, Christ taking our flesh, makes this human nature appear lovely to God. As when the sun shines on the glass, it casts a bright lustre, so Christ being clad with our flesh makes the human nature shine, and appear amiable in God's eyes.

(2.) As Christ being clothed with our flesh, makes the human nature appear lovely to God, so he makes the divine nature ap-



pear lovely to man.' The pure Godhead is terrible to behold, we could not see it and live: but Christ clothing himself with our flesh, makes the divine nature more amiable and delightful to us. Now we need not be afraid to look upon God, seeing him thro' Christ's human nature. It was a custom of old among the shepherds, they were wont to clothe themselves with sheep-skins, to be more pleasing to the sheep; so Christ clothed himself with our flesh, that the divine nature may be more pleasing to us. The human nature is a glass, through which we may see the love and wisdom, and glory of God clearly represented to us. Through the lantern of Christ's humanity, we may behold the light of the Deity shining. Christ being incarnate, he makes the sight of the Deity not formidable, but delightful to us.

4. Jesus Christ united himself to man, 'that man might be drawn nearer to God.' God before was an enemy to us, by reason of sin; but Christ taking our flesh, doth mediate for us, and bring us into favour with God. As when a king is angry with a subject, the king's son marries the daughter of this subject, and so mediates for this subject, and brings him into favour with the king again: So, when God the Father was angry with us, Christ married himself to our nature, and now mediates for us with his Father, and brings us to be friends again, and now God looks upon us with a favourable aspect. As Joab pleaded for Absalom, and brought him to king David, and David kissed him, so doth Jesus Christ ingratiate us into the love and favour of God. Therefore he may well be called a peace-maker, having taken our flesh upon him, and so made peace between us and his angry Father.

*Use 1. Branch 1.* See here, as in a glass, the infinite love of God the Father, and when we had lost ourselves by sin, then God in the riches of his grace, did send forth his Son made of a woman to redeem us. And behold the infinite love of Christ, that he was willing thus to condescend to take our flesh. Surely the angels would have disdained to have taken our flesh, it would have been a disparagement to them. What king would be willing to wear sackcloth over his cloth of gold? but Christ did not disdain to take our flesh. O the love of Christ! had not Christ been made flesh, we had been made a curse; had not he been incarnate, we had been incarcerated, and had been for ever in prison. Well might an angel be the herald to proclaim this joyful news of Christ's incarnation, Luke ii. 10. 'Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy; for unto you is born this day a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.' The love of Christ in being incarnate, will the more appear if we consider;

1. Whence Christ came. He came from heaven, and from the richest place in heaven, his Father's bosom, that hive of sweetness.

2. To whom Christ came. Was it to his friends? No, he came to sinful man. Man that had defaced his image, abused his love; man who was turned rebel; yet he came to man, resolving to conquer obstinacy with kindness. If he would come to any, why not to the angels that fell? Heb. ii. 16. 'He in no wise took upon him the nature of angels.' The angels are of a more noble extract, more intelligible creatures, more able for service; ay, but behold the love of Christ, he came not to the fallen angels, but to mankind. Among the several wonders of the loadstone, this is not the least, that it will not draw gold or pearl, but despising these, it draws the iron to it, one of the most inferior metals; thus Christ leaves the angels, those noble spirits, the gold and the pearl, and he comes to poor sinful man, and draws him into his embraces.

3. In what manner he came. He came not in the majesty of a king, attended with his life-guard, but he came poor: not like the heir of heaven, but like one of an inferior descent. The place he was born in was poor: not the royal city Jerusalem, but Bethlehem, a poor obscure place. He was born in an inn, and a manger was his cradle, the cobwebs his curtains, the beasts his companions; he descended of poor parents. One would have thought, if Christ would have come into the world, he would have made choice of some queen or personage of honour to have descended from: but he comes of mean obscure parents; that they were poor, appears by their offering, Luke ii. 24. 'A pair of turtle-doves,' which was the usual offering of the poor, Lev. xii. 8. Christ was so poor, that when he wanted money, he was fain to work a miracle for it, Matth. xvii. 27. He, when he died, made no will. He came into the world poor.

4. Why he came. That he might take our flesh, and redeem us; that he might instate us into a kingdom. He was poor, that he might make us rich, 2 Cor. viii. 9. He was born of a virgin, that he might be born of God. He took our flesh, that he might give us his Spirit. He lay in the manger, that we might lie in paradise. He came down from heaven, that he might bring us to heaven. And what was all this but love? If our hearts be not rocks, this love of Christ should affect us: behold love that passeth knowledge! Eph. iii. 19.

Branch 2. See here the wonderful humility of Christ: Christ was made flesh, *O sanctu humilitas, tu filiam Dei descendere fecisti in uterum, Mariæ Virginis*, Austin. That Christ should clothe himself with our flesh, a piece of that earth which we tread upon; O infinite humility! Christ's taking our flesh, was one of the lowest steps of his humiliation. Christ did humble himself more in lying in the Virgin's womb, than in hanging upon the cross. It was not so much for man to die, but for

God to become man, that was the wonder of humility, Phil. ii. 7. 'He was made in the likeness of man.' For Christ to be made flesh, was more humility, than for the angels to be made worms. Christ's flesh is called a vail, Hebrews x. 20. 'Through the vail,' that is, his flesh, Christ's wearing our flesh, veiled his glory. For him to be made flesh, who was equal with God, O humility! Phil. ii. 6. 'Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God.' He stood upon even ground with God, he was co-essential and con-substantial with his Father, as Austin and Cyril, and the council of Nice express it; yet, for all this, he takes flesh. Christ stript himself of the robes of his glory, and covered himself with the rags of our humanity. If Solomon did so wonder that God should dwell in the temple, which was enriched and hung with gold, how may we wonder that God should dwell in man's weak and frail nature? Nay, which is yet more humility, Christ not only took our flesh, but took it when it was at the worst, under disgrace; as if a servant should wear a nobleman's livery, when he is impeached of high treason. Nay, besides, Christ took all the infirmities of our flesh. There are two sorts of infirmities! Such as are sinful without pain, or such as are painful without sin. The first of these infirmities Christ did not take upon him, sinful infirmities, to be covetous or ambitious, Christ never took these upon him: But Christ took upon him painful infirmities; as, 1. Hunger, Matth. xxi. 18. He came to the fig-tree, and would have eaten. 2. Weariness; as when he sat on Jacob's well to rest him, John iv. 6. 3. Sorrow, Matth. xxvi. 38. 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.' It was a sorrow guided with reason, not disturbed with passion. 4. Fear, Heb. v. 7. 'He was heard in that he feared.' Nay, yet a further degree of Christ's humility, he not only was made flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh, 'He knew no sin, yet he was made sin,' 2 Cor. v. 21. He was like a sinner; he had all sin laid upon him, but no sin lived in him. Isa. liii. 12. 'He was numbered among transgressors.' He who was numbered among the persons of the Trinity, he is said to bear the 'sins of many,' Heb. ix. 28. Now, this was the lowest degree of Christ's humiliation: For Christ to be reputed as a sinner, never such a pattern of humility. That Christ, who would not endure sin in the angels, should himself endure to have sin imputed to him, it is the most amazing humility that ever was.

From all this learn to be humble. Dost thou see Christ humbling himself, and art thou proud? 'Tis the humble saint that is Christ's picture. Christians, be not proud of your fine fathers: 1. Hast thou an estate! be not proud, the earth thou treadest on is richer than thou: it hath mines of gold and silver in the bowels of it. 2. Hast thou beauty? be not proud: it



is but air and dust mingled. 3. Hast thou skill and parts? be humble: Lucifer hath more knowledge than thou. 4. Hast thou grace? be humble: thou hast it not of thy own growth, it is borrowed. Were it not folly to be proud of a ring that is lent? 1 Cor. iv. 7. 'Thou hast more sin than grace, spots than beauty. O look on Christ, this rare pattern, and be humbled! It is an unseemly sight to see God humbling himself, and man exalting himself; to see an humble Saviour, and a proud sinner. God hates the very resemblance of pride, Lev. ii. 11. He would have no honey in the sacrifice. Indeed leaven is sour; but why no honey? because, when honey is mingled with meal or flour, it makes the meal to rise and swell; therefore no honey. God hates the resemblance of the sin of pride; better want parts, comforts of Spirit, than humility. *Si Deus superbientibus angelis non pepercit*: If God, saith Austin, spared not the angels, when they grew proud, will he spare thee, who art but dust and rottenness?

*Branch 3.* Behold here a sacred riddle or paradox; 'God manifest in the flesh.' The text calls it a mystery. That man should be made in God's image, was a wonder; but that God should be made in man's image, is a greater wonder. That the Ancient of days should be born, that he who thunders in the heaven should cry in the cradle: *Qui tonitruat in cælis, clamat in cunabulis*; *qui regit sidera, fugit ubera*; that he who rules the stars, should suck the breast; that a virgin should conceive, that Christ should be made of a woman, and of that woman which himself made; that the branch should bear the vine; that the mother should be younger than the child she bare, and the child in the womb bigger than the mother; that the human nature should not be God, yet one with God: this was not only *mirum* but *miraculum*. Christ taking flesh is a mystery we shall never fully understand till we come to heaven, when our light shall be clear, as well as our love perfect.

*Branch 4.* From hence, 'God manifest in the flesh, Christ born of a virgin,' a thing not only strange in nature, but impossible, learn, 'That there are no impossibilities with God:' God can bring about things which are not within the sphere of nature to produce; that iron should swim, that the rock should gush out water, that the fire should lick up the water in the trenches, 1 Kings xviii. 28. 'Tis natural for the water to quench the fire, but for the fire to consume the water, this is impossible in the course of nature: but God can bring about all this, Jer. xxxii. 27. 'There is nothing too hard for thee.' Zech. viii. 6. 'If it be marvellous in your eyes, should it be marvellous in my eyes? saith the Lord.' How should God be united to our flesh? it is impossible to us, but not with God; he can do what transcends reason, and exceeds faith. He

would not be our God, if he could not do more than we can think, Eph. iii. 20. He can reconcile contraries. How apt are we to be discouraged with seeming impossibilities? How do our hearts die within us, when things go cross to our sense and reason? We are apt to say as that prince, 2 Kings vii. 1, 2. 'If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?' It was a time of famine, and now that a measure of wheat, which was a good part of a bushel, should be sold for a shekel, viz. half an ounce of silver, how can this be? So, when things are cross, or strange, God's own people are apt to question, how they should be brought about with success? Moses, who was a man of God, and one of the brightest stars that ever shined in the firmament of God's church, yet he was apt to be discouraged with seeming impossibilities, Numb. xi. 21. 'And Moses said, the people among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen, and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat for a whole month: shall the flocks and herds be slain for them to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered for them, to suffice them?' As if he had said, in plain language, he did not see how the people of Israel, being so numerous, could be fed for a month, ver. 23. 'And the Lord said, Is the Lord's hand waxed short?' Surely, that God who brought Isaac out of a dead womb, and the Messiah out of a virgin's womb, what cannot he do? O let us rest upon the arm of God's power, and believe in him, in the midst of seeming impossibilities. Remember, 'there are no impossibilities with God.' He can subdue a proud heart, He can raise a dying church. Christ born of a virgin, that wonder-working God that wrought this, can bring to pass the greatest seeming impossibilities.

*Use 2. Of exhortation. Branch 1.* Seeing Christ took our flesh, and was born of a virgin, let us labour that he may be spiritually born in our hearts. What will it profit us, that Christ was born into the world, unless he be born in our hearts; that he was united to our nature, unless he be united to our persons? Marvel not that I say to you, Christ must be born again, viz. in our hearts, Gal. iv. 19. 'Till Christ be formed in you.' Now, then, try if Christ be born in your hearts.

*Q. How shall we know that?*

*Ans. 1.* There are pangs before the birth; so, before Christ be born in the heart, there are spiritual pangs. Some pangs of conscience, deep convictions, Acts ii. 37. 'They were pricked at their heart.' I grant the new-birth doth *recipere magis et minus*—all have not the same pangs of sorrow and humiliation, yet all have pangs. If Christ be born in thy heart, thou hast been deeply afflicted for sin. Christ is never born in the heart without pangs. Many thank God they never had any trouble

of spirit, they were always quiet; a sign Christ is not yet formed in them.

2. As, when Christ was born into the world, he was made flesh; so, if he be born in thy heart, he makes thy heart an heart of flesh, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Is thy heart incarnate? before it was a rocky heart and would not yield to God, or take the impressions of the word; *durum est quod non cedit tactui*; now it is fleshly and tender, like melted wax, to take any stamp of the Spirit. This is a sign Christ is born in our hearts; when they are hearts of flesh, they melt in tears and in love. What is it the better Christ was made flesh, unless he hath given thee an heart of flesh?

3. Christ was conceived in the womb of a virgin; so, if he be born in thee, thy heart is a virgin-heart, in respect of sincerity and sanctity. Art thou purified from the love of sin? If Christ be born in thy heart, it is a *sanctum sanctorum*, an holy of holies. If thy heart be polluted with the predominant love of sin, never think Christ is born there; Christ will never lie any more in a stable. If he be born in thy heart; it is consecrated by the Holy Ghost.

4. If Christ be born in thy heart, then it is with thee as in a birth: 1. There is life. Faith is *principium vivens*, it is the vital artery of the soul, Gal. ii. 20. 'The life that I live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God.' 2. There is appetite, 1 Pet. ii. 7. 'As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word.' The word is like breast-milk, pure, sweet, nourishing; the soul in which Christ is formed, desires this breast-milk. St. Bernard, in one of his soliloquies, comforts himself with this, That sure he had the new birth in him, because he found in his heart such strong anhelations and thirstings after God. 3. Motion. After Christ is born in the heart, there is a violent motion; there is striving 'to enter in at the strait gate,' and offering violence to the kingdom of heaven, Matth. xii. 11. By this we may know Christ is formed in us. This is the only comfort, that as Christ was born into the world, so he is born in our hearts; as he was united to our flesh, so he is united to our person.

Branch 2. As Christ was made in our image, let us labour to be made in his image: Christ being incarnate was made like us, let us labour to be made like him. There are three things in which we should labour to be like Christ. 1. In disposition. He was of a most sweet disposition *delicie humani generis*, Tit. Vespasian. He invites sinners to come to him. He hath bowels to pity us, breasts to feed us, wings to cover us. He would not break our heart, but with mercy. Was Christ made in our likeness? let us labour to be made in his likeness. Let us be like him in this sweetness of disposition: be not of a mor-



rose spirit. It was said of Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 18. 'He is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.' Some are so barbarous, as if they were a-kin to the ostrich, they are fired with rage, and breathe forth nothing but revenge; like those two men in the gospel 'possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce,' Matth. viii. 28. Let us be like Christ in mildness and sweetness. Let us pray for our enemies, and conquer them by love. David's kindness melted Saul's heart, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16. A frozen heart will be thawed with the fire of love.

2. Be like Christ in grace. He was like us in having our flesh, let us be like him in having his grace. In three graces we should labour to be like Christ: 1. In humility, Phil. ii. 8. 'He humbled himself;' he left the bright robes of his glory, to be clothed with the rags of our humanity: a wonder to humility! Let us be like Christ in this grace. Humility, saith St. Bernard, is *contemptus propriæ excellentiæ*, a contempt of self-excellency, a kind of self-annihilation. 'This is the glory of a Christian. We are never so comely in God's eyes, as when we are black in our own. In this let us be like Christ. True religion is to imitate Christ. And indeed, what cause have we to be humble, if we look within us, about us, below us, above us?

(1.) If we look *intra nos*, within us, here we see our sins represented to us in the glass of conscience; lust, envy, passion. Our sins are like vermin crawling in our souls, Job xiii. 23. 'How many are my iniquities?' Our sins are as the sands of the sea for number, as the rocks of the sea for weight. Austin cries out, *Vae mihi, fœcibus peccatorum polluitur templum Domini*.—My heart, which is God's temple, is polluted with sin.

(2.) If we look *juxta nos*, about us; here is that may humble us. We may see other Christians out-shining us in gifts and graces, as the sun out-shines the lesser planets. Others are laden with fruit, perhaps we have but here and there an olive-berry growing, to shew that we are of the right kind, Isa. xvii. 6.

(3.) If we look *infra nos*, below us; here is that may humble us. We may see the mother earth, out of which we came. The earth is the most ignoble element, Job xxx. 8. 'Thou art viler than the earth.' Thou that dost set up thy scutcheon, and blaze thy coat of arms, behold thy pedigree; thou art but *pulvis animatus*, walking ashes: and wilt thou be proud! What is Adam? He is the son of dust; and what is dust? the son of nothing.

(4.) If we look *supra nos*, above us; here is that may humble us. If we look up to heaven, there we may see God resisting the proud, *Superbos sequitur ultor a tergo Deus*—The proud

man is the mark which God shoots at, and he never misses the mark. He threw proud Lucifer out of heaven; he thrust proud Nebuchadnezzar out of his throne, and turned him to eat grass, Dan iv. 29. O then be like Christ in humility.

3. Did Christ take our flesh? was he made like to us? let us be made like to him in zeal, John ii. 16. 'The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.' He was zealous when his Father was dishonoured. In this let us be like Christ, zealous for God's truth and glory, which are the two orient pearls of the crown of heaven. Zeal is as needful for a Christian, as salt for the sacrifice, or fire on the altar. Zeal without prudence, is rashness; prudence without zeal, is cowardliness. Without zeal, our duties are not acceptable to God. Zeal is like rosin to the bow-strings, without which the lute makes no music.

4. Be like Christ, in the contempt of the world. When Christ took our flesh, he came not in the pride of flesh, he did not descend immediately from kings and nobles, but was of mean parentage. Christ was not ambitious of titles of honour. Christ did as much decline the worldly dignity and greatness, as others seek it. When they would have made him a king, he refused it; he chose rather to ride upon the foal of an ass, than to be drawn in a chariot; and to hang upon a wooden cross, than to wear a golden crown. Christ scorned the pomp and glory of the world; he waved secular affairs, Luke xii. 13. 'Who made me a judge?' His work was not to arbitrate matters of law; he came not into the world to be a magistrate, but a Redeemer. Christ was like a star in an higher orb, he minded nothing but heaven. Was Christ made like us? let us be made like him, in heavenliness and contempt of the world. Let us not be ambitious of the honours and preferments of the world; let us not purchase the world with the loss of a good conscience. What wise man would damn himself, to grow rich? or pull down his soul, to build up an estate? Be like Christ in an holy contempt of the world.

5. Be like Christ in conversation. Was Christ incarnate? was he made like us? let us be made like him in holiness of life. No temptation could fasten upon Christ. John xiv. 30. 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.' Temptation to Christ was like a spark of fire upon a marble pillar, which glides off. Christ's life, saith Chrysostom, was brighter than the sun beams. Let us be like him in this, 2 Pet. i. 16. 'Be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' We are not, saith Austin, to be like Christ in working miracles, but in a holy life. A christian should be both a loadstone and a diamond: a loadstone, in drawing others to Christ; a diamond, casting a sparkling lustre of holiness in his life. O let us be so just in our dealings, so true in our promises, so devout in our

worship, so unblameable in our lives, that we may be the walking pictures of Christ. Thus as Christ was made in our likeness, let us labour to be made in his likeness.

*Branch 3.* If Jesus Christ was so abased for us; he took our flesh, which was a disparagement to him; it was mingling dust with gold: if he, I say, abased himself so for us, let us be willing to be abased for him. If the world reproach us for Christ's sake, and cast dust on our name, let us bear it with patience. The Apostles; Acts v. 41. departed from the council 'rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's name:' that they were graced to be disgraced for Christ. That is a good saying of St. Austin, *Quid fuit detrahit famæ, meæ addet mercedi meæ*; they who take away from a saint's name, shall add to his reward; and while they make his credit weigh lighter, they make his crown weigh heavier. O was Christ content to be humbled and abased for us, to take our flesh, and to take it when it was in disgrace! Let us not think much to be abased for Christ. Say as David, 2 Sam. vi. 22. 'If this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile.' If to serve my Lord Christ, if to keep my conscience pure, if this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile.

*Use 3d, of comfort.* Jesus Christ having taken our flesh, hath ennobled our nature, *naturam nostrum nobilitavit*. Our nature is now invested with greater royalties and privileges than in time of innocency. Before, in innocency, we were made in the image of God; but now, Christ having assumed our nature, we are made one with God; our nature is ennobled above the angelical nature. Christ taking our flesh, hath made us nearer to himself than the angels. The angels are his friends, believers are flesh of his flesh, his members, Eph. v. 30. and chap. i. 23. And the same glory which is put upon Christ's human nature, shall be put upon believers.

## CHRIST'S EXALTATION.

PHIL. ii. 9. *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, &c.*

BEFORE, we have spoken of Christ's humiliation, now of his exaltation: before you saw the Sun of righteousness in the eclipse; now you shall see it coming out of the eclipse; and shining in its full splendor and glory: 'Wherefore God hath highly exalted him;' *super exaltavit*, Ambr. "Above all exaltation."

Q. XXVIII. *Wherein consists Christ's exaltation?*



*Ans.* In his rising from the dead, his ascending into heaven ; and sitting at the right hand of God the Father, &c.

*Q.* In what sense hath God exalted Christ ?

*Ans.* Not in respect of Christ's Godhead, for that cannot be exalted higher than it is : as in Christ's humiliation the Godhead was not lower : so in his exaltation, the Godhead is not higher : but Christ is exalted as Mediator, his human nature is exalted.

*Q.* How many ways is Christ exalted ?

*Ans.* Five ways : God hath exalted Christ. 1. In his titles. 2. In his office. 3. In his ascension. 4. In his session at God's right hand. 5. In constituting him the judge of the world.

*First title.* 1. God hath exalted Christ in his titles, 1. He is exalted to be a Lord, Acts ix. 17. ' The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.' He is a Lord in respect of his sovereignty ; he is Lord over angels and men, Mat. xxviii. 18. ' All power is given to him.' Christ hath three keys in his hand, the key of the grave, to open the graves of men at the resurrection ; the key of heaven, to open the kingdom of heaven to whom he will ; the key of hell ; Rev. i. 18. to lock up the damned in that fiery prison.

To this LORD all knees must bow, Phil. ii. 10. ' That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow : ' *Name*, is put here for *person* ; to that holy thing Jesus, to the sceptre of that divine person every knee shall bow. *Bowing* is put for *subjection* ; all must be subdued to him as sons or captives, submit to him as to the Lord or judge ; ' Kiss the Son,' Psal. ii. 12. with a kiss of love and loyalty. We must not only cast ourselves into Christ's arms to be saved by him, but we must cast ourselves at his feet, to serve him.

*Second title*, Christ is exalted to be a prince, Dan. xii. 1. ' There shall stand up Michael the great prince ; ' Some think it was a created angel, but it was *Angelus Fœderis*, Christ the angel of the covenant. He is a great prince, Rev. i. 5. ' The Prince of the kings of the earth : ' they hold their crowns by immediate tenure from him ; his throne is above the stars, he hath angels and archangels for his attendants. Thus he is exalted in his titles of honour.

*2dly*, God hath exalted Christ in his office ; he hath honoured him to be *Salvator mundi*, the Saviour of the world, Acts v. 31. ' Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince, and a Saviour.' It was a great honour to Moses to be a temporal Saviour ; but what is it to be the Saviour of souls ? Christ is called the horn of salvation, Luke i. 69. He saves from sin, Matth. i. 24. From wrath, 1 Thes. i. 10. To save is a flower belongs only to his crown, Acts iv. 12. ' Neither is there salvation in any other.' What an honour is this to Christ ? how

doth this make heaven ring of saints praises? They sing hallelujahs to Christ their Saviour, Rev. v. 9. 'They sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.'

*3dly*, God hath exalted Christ in his ascension, if he be ascended, then he is exalted. Austin saith "Some were of opinion that Christ's body ascended into the orb and circle of the sun:" so the Hermians. But the scripture is plain, he ascended into heaven, Luke xxiv. 51. and Eph. iv. 10. 'Far above all heavens;' therefore above the firmament. He is ascended into the highest part of the empyrean heaven, which Paul calls the third heaven. Concerning Christ's ascension, two things:

1. The manner of Christ's ascension: 1st, Christ being to ascend, blessed his disciples, Luke xxiv. 50. 'He lift up his hands, and blessed them, and while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.' Christ did not leave his disciples houses and lands, but he left them his blessing.

*2dly*, Christ ascended as a conqueror, in a way of triumph, Psal. lxxviii. 18. 'Thou hast led captivity captive,' &c. He triumphed over sin, hell, and death; and Christ's triumph is a believer's triumph: Christ hath conquered sin and hell for every believer.

*3dly*, The fruit of Christ's ascension: Christ's ascension to heaven causeth the descension of the holy Spirit into our hearts, Eph. iv. 8. 'When he ascended up on high, he gave gifts to men.' Christ having ascended up in the clouds, as his triumphant chariot, gives the gift of his Spirit to us: as a king at his coronation bestows gifts liberally to his favourites.

*4thly*, God hath exalted Christ in his session at God's right hand, Mark xvi. 16. 'After the Lord had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven, and sat upon the right hand of God.' Eph. i. 20. 'He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, far above all principality, and power, and every name that is named.'

*Q. What is meant by Christ's sitting at God's right hand?*

*Ans.* To speak properly, God hath no right-hand or left; for being a spirit, he is void of all bodily parts: but it is a borrowed speech, a metaphor taken from the manner of kings, who were wont to advance their favourites next to their own persons, and set them at their right-hand: Solomon caused a seat to be set for the queen his mother, and placed her at his right-hand, 2 Kings ii. 10. So for Christ to sit at the right-hand of God, is to be in the next place to God the Father in dignity and honour. The human nature of Christ, being personally

united to the divine, is now set down on a royal throne in heaven, and adored even of angels.

By virtue of the personal union of Christ's human nature with the divine, there is a communication of all that glory from the Deity of Christ as his human nature is capable of. Not that the manhood of Christ is advanced to an equality with the Godhead, but the divine nature being joined with the human, the human nature is wonderfully glorified, though not deified. Christ as mediator is filled with all majesty and honour, beyond the comprehension of the highest order of angels: Christ in his humiliation descended so low, that it was not fit to go lower; and in his exaltation he ascended so high, that it is not possible to go higher. In his resurrection he was exalted above the grave, in his ascension he was exalted above the æry and starry heaven; in his sitting at God's right-hand, he is exalted above the highest heavens far, Eph. iv. 10. 'Far above all heavens.'

5thly, God hath exalted Christ in constituting him judge of the whole world, John v. 22. 'The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.' At that day of judgment shall Christ be exalted supereminently, 'He shall come in the glory of his Father,' Mark viii. 38. He shall wear the same embroidered robes of majesty, as the Father; and he shall come with all his holy angels, Mat. xxv. 31. He who was led to the bar with a band of soldiers, shall be attended to the bench with a guard of angels: Christ shall judge his judges, He shall judge Pilate that condemned him: kings must leave their throne, and come to his bar. And this is the highest court of judicature, from whence is no appeal.

1st Use of information, Branch 1. See Christ's different state on earth, and now in heaven: O how is the scene altered! when he was on earth, he lay in a manger, now he sits on a throne; then was he hated and scorned of men, now he is adored of angels; then his name was reproached, now 'God hath given him a name above every name,' Phil. ii. 9. Then he came in the form of a servant, and as a servant, stood with his basin and towel, and washed his disciples feet, John xiii. 4, 5. now he is clad in his prince's robes, and the kings of the earth cast their crowns before him; on earth he was a man of sorrow, now he is anointed with the oil of gladness; on earth was his crucifixion, now his coronation; then his Father frowned upon him in desertion, now he hath set him at his right-hand; before he seemed to have no form or beauty in him, Isa. liii. 3. now he is the brightness of his Father's glory, Heb. i. 3. O what a change is here! 'him hath God highly exalted.'

Branch 2. Was Christ first humble, and then exalted? hence learn, 'the way to true honour is humility,' Luke xiv. 11. 'He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' The world looks



upon humility as that which will make one contemptible, but it is the ready way to honour: the way to rise is to fall, the way to ascend is to descend. Humility exalts us in the esteem of men, and it exalts us to an higher throne in heaven, Mat. xviii. 4. 'Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven,' viz. He shall have a greater degree of glory in it.

*Branch 3.* Christ suffered, and then was exalted: see hence, that sufferings must go before glory. Many desire to be glorified with Christ, but they are not content to suffer for Christ, 2 Tim. ii. 12. 'If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him.' The wicked first reign and then suffer; the godly first suffer and then reign: there is no way to Constantinople, but through the Straits; no way to heaven, but through sufferings; no way to the crown but by the way of the cross. Jerusalem above is a pleasant city, streets of gold, gates of pearl; but we must travel through a dirty road to this city, through many reproaches and sufferings, Acts xiv. 22. We must enter into glory as Christ did; first he suffered shame and death, and now is exalted to sit at God's right-hand.

*2d Use, of comfort, Branch 1.* Christ, being so highly exalted, hath ennobled our nature; he hath crowned it with glory, and lifted it above angels and archangels; though Christ, as he was man, was made a little lower than the angels, Heb. ii. 9. yet as the human nature is united to the divine, and is at God's right-hand, so the human nature is above the angels. And if God hath so dignified our human nature, what a shame is it that we should debase it? God hath exalted the human nature above the angels, and the drunkard abaseth the human nature below the beasts.

*Branch 2.* Christ being exalted at God's right-hand, the key of government is laid upon his shoulders; he governs all the affairs of the world for his own glory. Do you think when Christ is so highly advanced, and hath all power in heaven and earth in his hand, he will not take care of his elect, and turn the most astonishing providences to the good of his church? In a clock, the wheels move cross one to another, but all make the clock strike; so Christ being at his Father's right-hand, he will make the most cross providences tend to the salvation of his church.

*Branch 3.* Christ being at God's right-hand, we may be assured he hath now finished the work of man's redemption, Heb. x. 12. 'This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right-hand of God.' If Christ had not fully expiated sin, and satisfied God's law, he had not sitten down at God's right-hand, but had still lain in the grave: but now he is exalted to glory: this is an evident token he hath

done and suffered all that was required of him, for the working out of our redemption.

*Branch 4.* Though Jesus Christ is so highly exalted in glory, yet he is not forgetful of us on earth. Some, when they are raised to places of honour forget their friends; when the chief butler was restored to his place at court, then he forgot poor Joseph in prison: but it is not so with Christ; though he be exalted to such glory in heaven, yet he is not unmindful of his saints on earth. Our high priest hath all the names and wants of his people written upon his breast-plate: art thou tempted? Though Christ be in glory, he knows how to pity and succour thee, Heb. iv. 25. 'We have not an high-priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.' Dost thou mourn for sin? Christ, though in a glorified state, he hears thy sighs, bottles thy tears.

*Branch 5.* Christ being exalted at God's right-hand, this is for the comfort of believers, that they shall one day be exalted to that place of glory where he is: Christ's exaltation is our exaltation. Christ hath prayed for this, John xvii. 24. 'Father, I will that all those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.' And he is said to go before, to 'prepare a place' for believers, John xiv. 2. Christ is called the head, the church is called his body, Eph. i. 22, 23. The head being exalted to honour, the body mystical shall be exalted too; as sure as Christ is exalted far above all heavens, so sure will he institute believers in all that glory which his human nature is adorned with, John xvii. 22. As he here puts this grace upon the saints, so shortly will he put his glory upon them. This is comfort to the poorest Christian: perhaps thou hast scarce an house to put thy head in, yet thou mayest look up to heaven, and say, there is my house, there is my country; and I have already taken possession of heaven in my head Christ; he sits there, and it will not be long before I shall sit there with him; he is upon the throne of glory, and I have his word for it, I shall sit upon the throne with him, Rev. iii. 21.

*3d Use, Of exhortation:* Hath God highly exalted Christ? Let us labour to exalt him. Let us exalt, 1. His person. 2. His truths.

1. Let us exalt Christ in our hearts; believe, O adore and love him. We cannot lift Christ up higher in heaven, but we may in our hearts. 2. Let us exalt him in our lips; let us praise him. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, our tongues must be the organs in these temples; by praising and commending Christ, we exalt him in the esteem of others. 3. Let us exalt him in our lives, by living holy lives: *vera religio hæc, sine macula vivere lætant.* It is not all the doxologies and prayers in the world do so exalt Christ, as an holy life: this

makes Christ renowned, and lifts him up indeed, when his followers walk worthy of Christ.

2. Let us exalt Christ's truths. Bucholcerus, in his chronology, reports of the nobles of Polonia, that when ever the gospel is read, they lay their hands upon their swords, by that intimating they are ready to maintain the gospel with the hazard of their lives. Let us exalt Christ's truths; maintain the truths of Christ against error; maintain the doctrine of free grace against merit; the Deity of Christ against Socinianism.

Truth is the most orient pearl of Christ's crown; contend for the truth, as one would for a sum of money, that it should not be wrested out of his hand: this Christ takes to be an exalting of him, when we exalt his truth, wherein his glory is so much concerned.



## CHRIST THE REDEEMER.

Q. XXX. *HOW doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?*

A. The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

Here are in this answer two things: 1 Something implied, viz, that Christ is the glorious purchaser of our redemption, in these words, 'The redemption purchased by Christ.'

2. Something expressed, viz. that the Spirit applies to us this redemption purchased, by working faith in us, &c.

(1.) The thing here implied, that Jesus Christ is the glorious purchaser of our redemption. The doctrine of redemption by Jesus Christ is a glorious doctrine; it is the marrow and quintessence of the gospel: in this all a Christian's comfort lies. Great was the work of creation, but greater the work of redemption; it cost more to redeem us than to make us; in the one there was but the speaking of a word, in the other shedding of blood, Luke i. 51. The creation was but the work of God's fingers, Ps. viii. 3. Redemption the work of his arm, Heb. ix. 12. 'Having obtained eternal redemption for us.' Christ's purchasing redemption for us, implies, that our sins did mortgage and sell us; had there not been some kind of mortgaging, there had been no need of redemption: *redimere q. rursus emere*, Hierom. Now Christ, when we were thus mortgaged, and sold by sin, did purchase our redemption: Christ had the best right to redeem us, for he is our kinsman. The Hebrew word for Redeemer, *Goel*, signifies a kinsman one that is near in blood: in the old law the nearest kinsman was to redeem his brother's land,



Ruth iv. 4. Thus Christ being near a-kin to us, 'Flesh of our flesh,' is the fittest to redeem us.

Q. *How doth Christ redeem us?*

A. By his own precious blood, Eph. i. 7. 'In whom we have redemption through his blood.' Among the Romans, he was said to redeem another, that laid down a price equivalent for the ransom of the prisoner. In this sense Christ is a Redeemer, he hath paid a price. Never such a price paid to ransom prisoners, 1 Cor. vi. 20. 'Ye are *pretio empti*, bought with a price: and this price was his own blood.' So, in the text, 'by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us, this blood being the blood of that person who was God as well as man, is a price sufficient for the ransom of millions.

Q. *From what doth Christ redeem us?*

A. From sin to be redeemed from Turkish slavery is a great mercy, but it is infinitely more to be redeemed from sin. There is nothing can hurt the soul, but sin: It is not affliction hurts it, it often makes it better, as the furnace makes gold the purer; but it is sin that doth damnify. Now, Christ redeems us from sin, Heb. ix. 26. 'Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.'

Q. *But how are we redeemed from sin? Do we not see corruption stirring in the regenerate? Much pride and mortified passion?*

Ans. We must distinguish of redemption: redemption is either *inchoata* or *plena*; i. e. a redemption but begun, and perfect; sin cannot stand with a perfect redemption: but here it is begun; sin may stand with an imperfect redemption. There may be some darkness in the air, at the sun's first rising, but not when the sun is at the full meridian: while our redemption is but begun, there may be sin; but not when it is perfect in glory.

Q. *But in what sense hath Christ redeemed justified persons from sin?*

Ans. 1. *reatu*, from the guilt of sin, though not the stain. Guilt is the binding a person over to punishment. Now Christ hath redeemed a justified person from the guilt of sin; he hath discharged his debts. Christ saith to God's justice, as Paul to Philemon, 'If he hath wronged thee any thing, or owes thee ought, put that on my account,' *ver.* 18.

2. A justified person is redeemed *a dominio*, from the power and regency of sin, though not the presence. Sin may *furere*, but not *regnare*; it may rage in a child of God, but not reign: lust did rage in David, fear in Peter, but it did not reign; they recovered themselves by repentance, Rom. vi. 14. 'Sin shall

not have dominion over you.' Sin lives in a child of God, but is deposed from the throne ; it lives not as a king, but a captive.

3. A believer is redeemed *a maledictione*, from the curse due to sin, Gal. iii. 13. 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' Christ said to his Father, as Rebecca to Jacob, 'upon me, upon me be the curse ; let the blessing be upon them, but upon me be the curse.' And now, there is no condemnation to believers, Rom. viii. 1. An unbeliever hath a double condemnation ; one from the law which he hath transgressed, and the other from the gospel which he hath despised. But Christ hath redeemed a believer from this malediction, he hath set him out of the power of hell and damnation.

Q. *To what hath Christ redeemed us ?*

A. He hath redeemed us to a glorious inheritance, 1 Pet. i.

4. 'To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.'

1. *To an inheritance* : Christ hath not only redeemed us out of prison, but he hath redeemed us to a state of happiness, to an inheritance ; heaven is not a lease which soon expires, but an inheritance ; and a glorious inheritance, Col. i. 12. An inheritance in light. *Lumen aëquat colores* ; light adorns and gilds the world : what were the world without light but a prison ? The heavenly inheritance is irradiated with light : Christ, as a continual sun, enlightens it with his beams, Rev. xxi. 23.

2. *To an inheritance incorruptible* : It doth not moulder away, or suffer dissolution. Earthly comforts are shadowed out by the tabernacle, which was transient ; but heaven is set out by the temple which was fixed and permanent, built with stone, overlaid with gold. This is the glory of the celestial inheritance ; it is incorruptible. Eternity is written upon the frontispiece of it.

3. *Undefiled*. The Greek word for undefiled, alludes to a precious stone called *Amiantus*, which cannot be blemished : such a place is heaven, undefiled, nothing can stain it ; there's no sin there to eclipse its purity. For the holiness and undefiledness of it, it is compared to pure gold, and to the sapphire and emerald, Rev. xxi. "The Sapphire hath a virtue (saith Pliny) to preserve chasteness ; the Emerald to expel poison." These are the lively emblems of heaven, to shew the sanctity of it ; no fever of lust ; no venom of malice ; there are none but pure virgin-spirits inhabit it.

4. *It fadeth not away* : The Greek word is the name of a flower *Amarantus* which keeps a long time fresh and green, as Clem. Alexandrinus writes. Such is the heavenly inheritance, it doth not lose its orient colour, but keeps its freshness and greenness to eternity ; the beauty of it fadeth not away. 'To this glorious inheritance hath Christ redeemed the saints :' an

inheritance which cannot be fully described or set forth by all the lights of heaven, tho' every star were a sun. And that which is the diamond in the ring, the glory of this inheritance, is the eternal sight and fruition of the blessed God; the sight of God will be a most alluring, heart-ravishing object: the king's presence makes the court, John iii. 2. 'We shall see him as he is.' It is comfortable to see God shewing himself through the lattice of an ordinance, to see him in the word and sacrament: the martyrs thought it comfortable to see him in a prison: O then, what will it be to see him in glory, shining ten thousand times brighter than the sun! and not only see him, but enjoy him for ever; *Premium quod fide non attingitur*, Aug. Faith itself is not able fully to comprehend this reward. And all this blessedness hath Christ purchased through the redemption of his blood.

*Use 1. Branch 1.* See into what a wretched, deplorable condition we had brought ourselves by sin: we had sinned ourselves into slavery; so that we needed Christ to purchase our redemption: *nihil durius servitute*; Cicero. "Slavery is the worst condition;" such as are now prisoners in Algiers think it so. But by sin we are in a worse slavery, slaves to Satan, a merciless tyrant, who sports in the damnation of souls. In this condition we were when Christ came to redeem us.

*Branch 2.* See in this, as in a transparent glass, the love of Christ to the elect; he came to redeem them: these he died intentionally for. Were it not great love for a king's son to pay a great sum of money to redeem a captive? But that he should be content to be a prisoner in his stead, and die for his ransom; this were matter of wonder. Jesus Christ hath done all this, he hath written his love in characters of blood:—It had been much for Christ to speak a good word to his Father for us, but he knew that was not enough to redeem us: though a word speaking made a world, yet it would not redeem a sinner, Heb. ix. 22. 'Without shedding of blood, there is no remission.'

*2d Use, Of Trial.* If Christ came to purchase our redemption, then let us try whether we are the persons whom Christ hath redeemed from the guilt and curse due to sin. This is a needful trial: for, let me tell you, there is but a certain number whom Christ hath redeemed. O, say sinners, Christ is a redeemer, and we shall be saved by him! Beloved, Christ came not to redeem all; then we overthrow the decrees of God. Redemption is not as large as creation. I grant there is a sufficiency of merit in Christ's blood to save all; but there's difference between sufficiency and efficiency. Christ's blood is a sufficient price for all, but it is effectual only to them that believe. A plaister may have a sovereign virtue in it to heal any wound, but it doth not heal unless applied to the wound. And



if it be so, that all have not the benefit of Christ's redemption, only some; then it is a necessary question to ask our souls, *Whether we are in the number of them that are redeemed by Christ or not?*

*Q. How shall we know that?*

*Ans.* Such as are redeemed, are reconciled to God; the enmity is taken away: their judgments approve, their wills incline *ad honum*, Col. i. 21. Are they redeemed that are unreconciled to God? who hate God and his people, (as the vine and laurel have an antipathy) who do all they can to disparage holiness? Are these redeemed who are unreconciled? Christ hath purchased a reprieve for these: but a sinner may have a reprieve, and yet go to hell, John v. 6.

2. Such as are redeemed by Christ are redeemed from the world, Gal. i. 4. 'Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver (or redeem) us from this present evil world.' Such as are redeemed by Christ, are risen with Christ, Col. iii. 1. As the birds, though they light upon the ground to pick up a little seed, yet immediately they take their wings and fly up to heaven again: so the redeemed of the Lord, though they use the world, and take the lawful comforts of it, yet their hearts are presently off these things, and they ascend to heaven; live here, and trade above. Such as Christ hath died for, are 'dead to the world;' to the honours, profits, and preferments of it. What shall we think of them who say, they are redeemed of the Lord, yet are lovers of the world? Like the tribes who desired to have their portion on this side Canaan: Phil. iii. 9. 'Who mind earthly things.' They pull down their souls to build up an estate. They are not redeemed by Christ who are not redeemed from the world.

3d Use, *Of comfort*, to such as are redeemed: you are happy, the lot of free grace is fallen upon you; you who were once in the devil's prison, you have broke this prison: you that were once bound in the chains of sin, God hath begun to beat off your chains, and hath freed you from the power of sin, and curse due to it. What a comfort is this? And is there any consolation in Christ? It is thine; is there any sweet fruit growing upon the promise? thou mayest gather it: are there any glorious privileges in the gospel? they are thy jointure, justification, adoption, coronation: is there any glory in heaven? thou shalt shortly drink of that river of pleasure: hast thou any temporal comforts? these are but a pledge and earnest of more: thy meal in the barrel is but a bait by the way, and an earnest of that angels' food which God hath prepared for thee. How mayest thou be comforted in all worldly afflictions, though the fig-tree flourish not? Nay, in case of death, death hath lost its sting, *Mors ebit morte Christi*. Death shall

carry thee to thy Redeemer: fear not dying, not happy but by dying.

*Use ult. Of exhortation.* Long for the time when you shall have a full and perfect redemption in heaven, an eternal jubilee; when you shall be freed not only from the power but from the presence of sin. Here a believer is as a prisoner that hath broken prison, but walks with a fetter on his leg: when the banner of glory shall be displayed over you, you shall be as the angels of God, you shall never have a sinful thought more; no pain or grief, no aching head or unbelieving heart. You shall see Christ's face, and lie for ever in his arms: you shall be as Joseph, Gen. xli. 14. They brought him hastily out of the dungeon, and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. Long for that time, when you shall put off your prison-garments, and change your raiment, and put on the embroidered garment of glory. O long! yet be content to wait for this full and glorious redemption, when you shall be more happy than you can desire, when you shall have 'that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into man's heart to conceive.'

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## OF FAITH.

**GAL. ii. 20.** *The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.*

THE Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us.

CHRIST is the glory, and faith in Christ the comfort of the gospel.

*Q. What are the kinds of faith?*

*Ans.* Fourfold: 1. An historical or dogmatical faith, which is the believing the truths revealed in the word, because of divine authority.

2. There is a temporary faith, which lasteth but for a time, and vanisheth, Matth. xiii. 21. 'Yet hath he no root in himself, but dureth for a while.' A temporary faith is like Jonah's gourd, which came up in a night and withered, chap. iv. 10.

3. A miraculous faith, which was granted to the apostles, to work miracles for the confirmation of the gospel: This Judas had; he cast out devils, yet was cast out to the devil.

4. A true justifying faith, which is called, 'A faith of the operation of God,' Col. ii. 12. and is a jewel hung only upon the elect.

*Q. What is justifying faith?*

*Ans.* I shall shew, (1.) *What it is not.* It is not a bare acknowledgement that Christ is a Saviour; indeed there must be an acknowledgement, but that is not sufficient to justify. The devils acknowledged Christ's Godhead, Matth. viii. 29. 'Jesus the Son of God.' There may be an assent to divine truth, yet no work of grace on the heart: many assent in their judgments, that sin is an evil thing, but they go on in sin, their corruptions are stronger than their convictions; and that Christ is excellent: they cheapen the pearl, but they do not buy.

(2.) *What justifying faith is?* I answer, true justifying faith consists in three things.

1. *Self-renunciation*: faith is a going out of one's self; a man is taken off from his own bottom, he sees he hath no righteousness of his own to save him, Phil. iii. 9. 'Not having my own righteousness.' Self-righteousness is a broken reed, the soul dares not lean on. Repentance and faith are both humbling graces; by repentance a man abhors himself; by faith he goes out of himself. It is with a sinner in the first act of believing, as with Israel in their wilderness march; behind them they saw Pharaoh and his chariots pursuing them, before them the Red-sea ready to devour them: so the soul behind sees God's justice pursuing him for sin, before, hell ready to devour him; and, in this forlorn condition, he sees nothing in himself to help him, but he must perish unless he can find help in another.

2. *Recumbency*: the soul casts itself upon Jesus Christ; 'faith rests on Christ's person.' Faith believes the promise; but that which faith rests upon in the promise, is the person of Christ: therefore the spouse is said to 'lean upon her beloved,' Cant. viii. 5. 'And faith is described to be a believing on the name of the Son of God,' John iii. 23. viz. on his person. The promise is but the cabinet, Christ is the jewel in it which faith embraceth; the promise is but the dish, Christ is the food in it which faith feeds on. And as faith rests on Christ's person, so on his person under this notion, 'as he was crucified.' Faith glories in the cross of Christ, Gal. vi. 14. To consider Christ as he is crowned with all manner of excellencies, doth rather stir up admiration and wonder; but Christ looked upon as bleeding and dying, is the proper object of our faith; therefore it is called 'faith in his blood,' Rom. iii. 25.

3. *Appropriation*, or the applying Christ to ourselves: a medicine, though it be never so sovereign, yet if not applied to the wound, will do no good, though the plaister be made of Christ's own blood, yet it will not heal, unless it be applied by faith; the blood of God, without faith in God, will not save. This applying of Christ is called a receiving of him, John i. 12. The hand receiving of gold, enricheth; so the hand of faith receiving Christ's golden merits with salvation enricheth us.



*Q. How is faith wrought?*

*A.* By the blessed Spirit; it is called the 'spirit of grace,' Zech. xii. 10. because it is the spring and efficient of all grace. Faith is the chief work which the Spirit of God works in a man's heart. In making the world God did but speak a word, but in working faith he puts forth his arm. Luke i. 51. The Spirit's working faith is called, 'The exceeding greatness of God's power.' What a power was put forth in raising Christ from the grave, when such a tomb-stone lay upon him, 'the sins of all the world!' yet he was raised up by the Spirit: the same power the Spirit of God puts forth in working faith, the Spirit irradiates the mind, subdues the will: the will naturally is like a garrison, which holds out against God; the Spirit with a sweet violence conquers, or rather changeth the will, making the sinner willing to have Christ upon any terms, to be ruled by him as well as saved by him.

*Q. Wherein lies the preciousness of faith?*

*A.* As faith is the chief gospel-grace, the head of the graces; as gold among the metals, so is faith among the graces, Clem. Alexandrinus calls the other graces the daughters of faith. Indeed, in heaven, love will be the chief grace; but, while we are here militant, love must give place to faith; love takes possession of glory, but faith gives a title to it. Love is the crowning grace in heaven, but faith is the conquering grace upon earth, 1 John v. 4. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

2. As faith hath influence upon all the graces, and sets them a-work, not a grace stirs till faith set it a-work. As the clothier sets the poor a-work, he sets their wheel a-going: faith sets hope a-work. The heir must believe his title to an estate in reversion, before he can hope for it; faith believes its title to glory, and then hope waits for it. Did not faith feed the lamp of hope with oil, it would soon die. Faith sets love a-work, Gal. v. 6. 'Faith which worketh by love;' believing the mercy and merit of Christ causeth a flame of love to ascend. Faith sets patience a-work, Heb. vi. 12. 'Be followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' Faith believes the glorious rewards given to suffering. This makes the soul patient in suffering. Thus faith is the master-wheel, it sets all the other graces a-running.

3. As faith is the grace which God honours to justify and save: thus indeed it is 'precious faith,' as the apostle calls it, 2 Pet. i. 1. The other graces help to sanctify, but it is faith that justifies, Rom. v. 1. 'Being justified by faith.' Repentance or love do not justify, but faith.

*Q. How doth faith justify?*

*A.* Faith doth not justify, 1. As it is a work, that were to

make Christ of our faith; but faith justifies, as it lays hold of the object, viz. Christ's merits. If a man had a precious stone in a ring that could heal, we say the ring heals; but properly it is not the ring, but the precious stone in the ring heals. Thus faith saves and justifies, but it is not any inherent virtue in faith, but as it lays hold on Christ, so it justifies.

2. Faith doth not justify as it exerciseth grace: it cannot be denied, faith doth invigorate all the graces, it puts strength and liveliness into them, but it doth not justify under this notion. Faith works by love, but it doth not justify as it works by love, but as it applies Christ's merits.

*Q. Why should faith save and justify more than any other grace?*

*Ans.* 1. Because of God's sanction: he hath appointed this grace to be justifying: and he doth it, because faith is a grace that takes a man off himself, and gives all the honour to Christ and free grace, Rom. iv. 20. 'Strong in faith, giving glory to God.' Therefore God hath put this honour on faith, to make it saving and justifying: The king's stamp makes the coin pass for current; if he would put his stamp upon leather, as well as silver, it would make it current: so God having put his sanction, the stamp of his authority and institution upon faith, this makes it to be justifying and saving.

2. Because faith makes us one with Christ, Eph. iii. 17. It is the espousing, incorporating grace; it gives us coalition and union with Christ's person: other graces make us like Christ, faith makes us members of Christ.

*1st Use, Of exhortation.* Let us above all things labour for faith; *Fides est sanctissimum humani pectoris bonum*: Eph. vi. 19. 'Above all taking the shield of faith.' Faith will be of more use to us than any grace: as an eye though dim, was of more use to an Israelite than all the other members of his body; not a strong arm, or a nimble foot; it was his eye looking on the brazen serpent that cured him. It is not knowledge, though angelical, not repentance, though we could shed rivers of tears, could justify us: only faith, whereby we look on Christ. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb. xi. 6. and if we do not please him by believing, he will not please us in saving of us. Faith is the condition of the covenant of grace; without faith, without covenant; and without covenant, without hope, Eph. ii. 12.

*2d Use, Of trial:* Let us try whether we have faith. There is something looks like faith, and is not; a Bristol-stone looks like a diamond. Some plants have the same leaf with others, but the herbalist can distinguish them by the root, and taste. Something may look like true faith, but it may be distinguished by the fruits. Let us be serious in the trial of our faith; there

is much depends upon our faith: if our faith be not good, there is nothing good comes from us; our duties and graces are adulterate.

*Q. Well then, how shall we know it is a true faith?*

*A.* By the noble effects: 1. Faith is a Christ prizing grace, it puts an high valuation upon Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 7. 'To you that believe he is precious,' St. Paul did best know Christ, 2 Cor. ix. 1. 'Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?' Paul saw Christ with his bodily eyes in a vision, when he was wrapped up into the third heaven; and saw him with the eye of his faith in the holy supper: therefore he best knew Christ. And see how he styles all things in comparison of him, Phil. iii. 8. 'I count all things but dung, that I may win Christ?' Do we set an high estimate upon Christ? could we be willing to part with the wedge of gold for the pearl of price? Greg. Nazianzen blessed God, he had any thing to lose for Christ's sake.

2. Faith is a refining grace, 1 Tim. iii. 9. 'Mystery of faith in a pure conscience.' Faith is in the soul, as fire among metals; it refines and purifies: morality may wash the outside, faith washeth the inside, Acts xv. 9. 'Having purified their hearts by faith.' Faith makes the heart a sacrary or holy of holies. Faith is a virgin-grace; though it doth not take away the life of sin, yet it takes away the love of sin. Examine if your hearts be an unclean fountain, sending out mud and dirt, pride, envy: if there be legions of lusts in thy soul, there is no faith. Faith is an heavenly plant, which will not grow in an impure soil.

3. Faith is an obediential grace, Rom. xvi. 26. 'The obedience of faith.' Faith melts our will into God's: faith runs at God's call; if God commands duty (tho' cros to flesh and blood) faith obeys, Heb. xi. 8. 'By faith Abraham obeyed.' Faith is not an idle grace; as it hath an eye to see Christ, so it hath an hand to work for him. Faith doth not only believe God's promise, but obey his command. It is not your having knowledge, will evidence you to be believers; the devil hath knowledge, but wants obedience, and that makes him a devil. And the true obedience of faith is a chearful obedience; God's commands do not seem grievous. Have you the obedience, and obey chearfully? what say you to this? Do you look upon God's command as your burden, or privilege; as an iron fetter about your leg, or a gold chain about your neck?

4. Faith is an assimilating grace; it changeth the soul into the image of the object, it makes it like Christ. Never did any look upon Christ with a believing eye, but he was made like Christ. A deformed person may look on a beautiful object, but not be made beautiful; but faith looking on Christ transforms a man, and turns him into his similitude. Faith looking on a



bleeding Christ, causeth a soft bleeding heart : looking on an holy Christ, causeth sanctity of heart ; looking on an humble Christ, makes the soul humble. As the camelion is changed into the colour of that which it looks upon ; so faith looking on Christ, changeth a Christian into the similitude of Christ.

3. By the growth of it ; if it be a true faith, it grows : living things grow, Rom. i. 17. ' From faith to faith.'

*Q. How may we judge of the growth of faith ?*

*A.* Growth of faith is judged, 1<sup>st</sup>, By strength. We can do that now, which we could not do before. When one is man-grown, he can do that which he could not do when he was a child ; he can carry a heavier burthen ; so thou canst bear crosses with more patience.

2<sup>dly</sup>, Growth of faith is seen by doing duties in a more spiritual manner, viz. with fervency ; we put coals to the incense, from a principle of love to God. When an apple hath done growing in bigness, it grows in sweetness ; thou dost duties in love, and now art sweeter, and come off with a better relish.

*Obj. But I fear I have no faith ?*

*Ans.* We must distinguish between weakness of faith and nullity ; a weak faith is true. The bruised reed is but weak, yet it is such as Christ will not break. Though thy faith be but weak, yet be not discouraged.

1. A weak faith may receive a strong Christ : a weak hand can tie the knot in marriage, as well as a strong : a weak eye might have seen the brazen serpent. The woman in the gospel, that but touched Christ, received virtue from him. The touch of faith.

2. The promise is not made to strong faith, but to true. The promise doth not say, whosoever hath a giant-faith, that can remove mountains, that can stop the mouths of lions, shall be saved ; but whosoever believes, be his faith never so small. Though Christ sometimes chides a weak faith ; yet that it may not be discouraged, he makes a promise to it, Mat. v. 3. *Beati qui esuriunt.*

3. A weak faith may be fruitful. Weakest things multiply most ; the vine is a weak plant, but it is fruitful. Weak Christians may have strong affections. How strong is the first love, which is after the first planting of faith !

4. Weak faith may be growing. The seeds spring up by degrees ; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Therefore be not discouraged ; God who would have us receive them that are weak in faith, Rom. xiv. 1. will not himself refuse them. A weak believer is a member of Christ ; and though Christ will cut off rotten members from his body, yet not weak members.

## EFFECTUAL CALLING.

ROM. viii. 30. *Them he also called.*

Q. XXXI. *WHAT is effectual calling?*

*A.* It is a gracious work of the Spirit, whereby he causeth us to embrace Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

In this verse is a golden chain of salvation, made up of four links; this is one, vocation; 'Them he also called.' Calling is *nova creatio*, a new creation, the first resurrection.—There is a two-fold call: 1. An extrinsic or outward call: 2. An intrinsic, or inward effectual call.

1. An extrinsic or outward call, which is God's offer of grace to sinners, inviting them to come in and accept of Christ and salvation, Mat. xx. 16. 'Many are called, but few chosen.' This outward call shews men what they ought to do in order to salvation, and renders them inexcusable in case of disobedience.

2. There is an intrinsic or effectual call when God with the offer of grace works grace: by this call the heart is renewed, and the will effectually drawn to embrace Christ. The outward call brings men to a profession of Christ, the inward to a possession of Christ.

Q. *What are the means of this effectual call?*

*Ans.* Every creature hath a voice to call us. The heavens call to us to behold God's glory, Ps. xix. 11. Conscience calls to us, God's judgments call to us, repent, Mic. vi. 9. 'Hear ye the rod.' But every voice doth not convert. There are two means of our effectual call:

1. The 'Preaching of the word,' which is the sounding God's silver trumpet in men's ears; God doth not speak by an oracle, he calls by his ministers. Samuel thought it had been only the voice of Eli, that called to him; but it was 'God's voice,' 1 Sam. iii. 6. So perhaps you think it is only the minister speaks to you in the word, but it is God himself speaks. Therefore Christ is said (now) to speak to us from heaven, Heb. xii. 25. How doth he speak but by his ministers? as a king speaks by his ambassadors: know, that in every sermon preached, God calls to you; and to refuse the message we bring, is to refuse God himself.

2. The other means of our effectual call, is the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the word is the pipe or organ; the Spirit of God blowing in it, doth effectually change men's hearts, Acts x. 44. 'While Peter spake the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word of God.' Ministers knock at the door of

men's hearts, the Spirit comes with a key and opens the door, Acts xiv. 6. 'A certain woman named Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened.'

*Q. From what doth God call men?*

*Ans.* 1. From sin; he calls them from their ignorance and unbelief, 1 Pet. i. 14. By nature the understanding is enveloped with darkness, God calls men 'from darkness to light,' Eph. v. 8. as if one should be called out of a dungeon to behold the light of the sun.

2. From danger. As the angel called Lot out of Sodom, when it was ready to rain fire; so God calls his people from the fire and brimstone of hell, and from all those curses they were exposed to.

3. He calls them out of the world; as Christ called Matthew from the receipt of custom, John xvii. 16. 'Ye are not of the world.' Such as are divinely called, are not natives here, but pilgrims; they do not conform to the world, or follow its sinful fashions: they are not of the world; though they live here, yet they trade in the heavenly country; the world is a place where Satan's throne is, Rev. ii. 13. A stage on which sin every day acts its part. Now such as are called, are in, but not of the world.

*Q. To what God calls men?*

*Ans.* 1. He calls them to holiness, 1 Thess. iv. 7. 'God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.' Holiness is the livery, or silver star the godly wear, Isa. lxiii. 18. *Knam kodsheta*, 'The people of thy holiness.' The called of God are anointed with the consecrating oil of the Spirit, 1 John ii. 20. 'Ye have an unction from the Holy One.'

2. God calls them to glory, as if a man were called out of a prison to sit upon a throne, 1 Thess. ii. 12. 'Who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.' Whom God calls, he crowns; 'it is a weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv. 17. The Hebrew word for glory (*Kavod*) signifies *pondus*, a weight; the weight of glory adds to the worth, the weightier gold is, the more it is worth. And this glory is not transient, but permanent, an eternal weight; it is better felt than expressed.

*Q. What is the cause of the effectual call?*

*Ans.* God's electing love, Rom. viii. 30. 'Whom he predestinated, them he also called.' Election is the fountain-cause of our vocation; it is not because some are more worthy to partake of the heavenly calling than others (as the Arminians) we were 'all in our blood,' Ezek. xvi. 6. And what worthiness in us? What worthiness was there in Mary Magdalene, out of whom seven devils were cast? What worthiness in the Corinthians, when God began to call them by his gospel? they were fornicators, effeminate, idolaters, 1 Cor. vi. 11. 'Such were



some of you, but ye are washed,' &c. Before effectual calling, we are not only 'without strength,' Rom. v. 6. but 'enemies,' Col. i. 21. So that the foundation of vocation is election.

Q. *What are the epithets or qualifications of this call?*

Ans. 1st, It is a powerful call; *verba Dei sunt opera*, Luther. God puts forth infinite power in calling home a sinner to himself, he doth not only put forth his voice, but his arm. The apostle speaks of the exceeding greatness of his power, 'he exerciseth towards them that believe,' Eph. i. 19. God rides forth conquering in the chariot of his gospel; he conquers the pride of the heart, and makes the will, which stood out as a fort-royal, to yield and stoop to his grace; he makes the stony heart bleed: it is a mighty powerful call. Why then do the Arminians seem to talk of a moral persuasion? that God, in the conversion of a sinner, doth only morally persuade, and no more. He sets his promises before them, to allure them to good, and his threatenings to deter them from evil; and here is all he doth. But sure moral persuasions alone are insufficient to the effectual call: how can the bare proposal of promises and threatenings convert a soul? This amounts not to a new creation, or that power which raised Christ from the dead; God doth not only persuade, but enable, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. If God, in conversion, should only morally persuade, that is, set good and evil before men, then God doth not put forth so much power in saving men, as the devil doth in destroying them. Satan doth not only propound tempting objects to men, but doth concur with his temptations; therefore he is said to 'work in the children of disobedience,' Eph. ii. 2. The Greek word, to work, signifies *imperii vim*, Cameron, the power Satan hath in carrying men to sin. And shall not God's power in converting, be greater than Satan's power in seducing? The effectual call is mighty and powerful; God puts forth a divine energy, nay, a kind of omnipotency: it is such a powerful call, that the will of man hath no power to resist.

2. It is an high calling, Phil. iii. 14. 'I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God.' It is an high calling, 1st, Because we are called to high exercises of religion; to be crucified to the world, to live by faith, to do angels work, to love God, to be living organs of his praise, to hold communion with the Father and the Son, 1 John i. 3.

2dly, It is an high calling, because we are called to high privileges; to justification and adoption, to be kings and priests unto God; 'We are called to the fellowship of angels, to be co-heirs with Christ,' Rom. viii. 17. 'They who are effectually called, are candidates of heaven, they are princes in all lands, Psal. xlv. 16. though princes in disguise.

3dly, It is an immutable call, Rom. xi. 9. 'The gifts and

calling of God are without repentance ;' that is, those gifts that flow from election, (as vocation and justification) these are without repentance. God repented he called Saul to be a king ; but ne never repents that he calls a sinner to be a saint.

*Use 1.* See the necessity of the effectual call, a man cannot go to heaven without it. First, we must be called before glorified, Rom. viii. 30. A man uncalled can lay claim to nothing in the Bible, but threatenings : a man in the state of nature is not fit for heaven, no more than a man in his filth and his rags is fit to come into a king's presence : a man in his pure naturals, is a God hater, Rom. i. 30. and is he fit for heaven ? will God lay his enemy in his bosom ?

*Use 3. Of trial.* Whether we are effectually called ? we may know it by the antecedent and consequent of it.

1. By the antecedent. Before this effectual call, an humbling work passeth upon the soul : a man is convinced of sin, he sees he is a sinner, and nothing but a sinner : the fallow-ground of his heart is broken up, Jer. iv. 3. As the husbandman breaks the clods, then casts in the seed ; so God, by the convincing work of the law, breaks a sinner's heart, and makes it fit to receive the seeds of grace. Such as were never convinced, were never called, John xvi. 8. ' He shall convince the world of sin.' Conviction is the first step to conversion.

2. By the consequents, two, (1.) He who is savingly called, answers to God's call : when God called Samuel, he answered, ' Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth,' 1 Sam. iii. 10. When God calls thee to an act of religion, thou dost run at God's call, Acts xxvi. 19. ' I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.' If God calls to duties contrary to flesh and blood, we obey his voice in every thing ; true obedience is like the needle which points that way which the loadstone draws. Such as are deaf to God's call, a sign they are not called by grace.—

(2.) He who is effectually called doth stop his ears to all other calls which would call him off from God. As God hath his call, so there are other contrary calls : Satan calls by a temptation, lust calls, evil company calls : but, as the adder stops its ear against the voice of the charmer ; so he who is effectually called, stops his ear against all the charms of flesh and devil.

*Use 3. Of comfort to them who are the called of God.* This call evidenceth election, Rom. viii. 30. ' Whom he predestinated, them he also called.' Election is the cause of our vocation, and vocation is the sign of our election. Election is the first link of the golden chain of salvation, vocation is the second ! he who hath the second link of the chain is sure of the first link : as by the stream we are led to the fountain, so by vocation we ascend to election. Calling is an earnest and pledge of glory, 2 Thess. ii. 13. ' God hath chosen you to salvation, through

sanctification.' We may read God's predestinating love in the work of grace in our heart.

*Branch 2.* To such as are called, to be thankful to God for this unspeakable blessing; be thankful to all the persons in the Trinity, to the Father's mercy, to the Son's merit, to the Spirit's efficacy. To make you thankful, consider, when you had offended God, that he should call you; that, when God needed you not, he had millions of glorified saints and angels to praise him, yet he called you. Again, consider what you were before God called you; you were in your sins; when God called Paul, he found him persecuting; when he called Matthew, he found him at the receipt of custom; when he called Zaccheus, he found him using extortion. When God calls a man by his grace, he finds him seeking after his lusts: as when Saul was called to the kingdom, he was seeking the asses: that God should call thee when thou art in the hot pursuit of sin, admire God's love, exalt his praise. Again, that God should call you, and pass by others, what mercy is this? Mat. xi. 26. 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' That God should pass by the wise and noble persons, of sweeter disposition, accuter parts, guilty of less vice, and that the lot of free grace should fall upon you; O astonishing love of God! It was a great favour of God to Samuel, that God called to him, and revealed his mind to him, and passed by Eli, though a judge and priest in Israel, 1 Sam. iii. 6. so, that God should call to thee, a flagitious sinner, and pass by others of higher birth, and better morals, here is that which calls aloud for praise. As God so governs the clouds, that he makes them rain upon one place, and not upon another. Two at a sermon, one his heart the Lord opens, the other is no more affected with it, than a deaf man with the sound of music: here is the banner of free grace displayed, and here should the trophies of praise be erected. Elijah and Elisha were walking together; on a sudden there came a chariot of fire, and carried Elijah up to heaven, but left Elisha behind: so, when two are walking together, husband and wife, father and child, that God should call one by his grace, but leave the other, carry up one in a triumphant chariot to heaven, but let the other perish eternally; O infinite rich grace! how should they that are called be affected with God's discriminating love? how should the vessels of mercy run over with thankfulness? how should they stand upon mount *Gerizzim*, blessing and praising God? O begin the work of heaven here! such as are patterns of mercy should be trumpeters of praise. Thus St. Paul being called of God, and seeing what a debtor he was to free grace, breaks forth into admiration and gratulation, 1 Tim. i. 13.

*Use 4. To the called.* Walk worthy of your high calling,



Eph. iv. 1. 'I beseech you, that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called ;' in two things.

1. Walk compassionately. Pity such as are yet uncalled : hast thou a child that God hath not yet called, a wife, a servant ? weep over their dying souls : they are in their blood, ' under the power of Satan : ' O pity them ! let their sins more trouble you than your own sufferings : if you pity an ox or ass going astray, will you not pity a soul going astray ? Shew your piety by your pity.

2. Walk holily. Your's is an holy calling, 2 Tim. i. 9. You are called to be saints, Rom. i. 7. Shew your vocation by a Bible conversation. Shall not flowers smell sweeter than weeds ? shall not they who are ennobled with grace, have more fragrantcy in their lives than sinners ? 1 Pet. i. 15. ' As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. O dishonour not your high calling by any fordid carriage : when Antigonus was going to defile himself with women, one told him, ' he was a king's son. ' O remember your dignity, ' called of God ! ' of the blood-royal of heaven : do nothing unworthy of your honourable calling. Scipio refused the embraces of an harlot, because he was general of an army. Abhor all motions to sin, because of your high calling. It is not fit for them who are the called of God, to do as others ; though others of the Jews did drink wine, it was not fit for the Nazarene, because he had a vow of seperation upon him, and had promised abstinence ; though Pagans and loose Christians take liberty to sin, yet it is not fit for them who are called out of the world, and have the mark of election upon them to do so : you are consecrated persons, your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and your bodies must be a sacrary, or holy of holies.



## OF JUSTIFICATION.

ROM. iii. 24. *Being justified freely by his grace.*

Q. XXXIII. *What is justification ?*

A. It is an act of God's free grace, whereby he pardoneth all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Justification is the very hinge and pillar of Christianity ; and an error about justification is dangerous, like a crack in the foundation, or an error in the first concoction. Justification by Christ, is a spring of the water of life ; and to have the poison

of corrupt doctrine cast into this spring, is damnable. It was a saying of Luther, "that after his death the doctrine of justification would be corrupted." As it hath been in these latter times, the Arminians and Socinians have cast a dead fly into this box of precious ointment.

I shall endeavour to follow the star of scripture to light me through this mysterious point.

*Q. What is meant by justification?*

*Ans.* It is *verbum forense*, a word borrowed from law-courts, wherein a person arraigned is pronounced righteous, and is openly absolved in the court. Thus God, in justifying a person, pronounceth him to be righteous, and looks upon him as if he had not sinned.

*Q. What is the ground of justification?*

*Ans.* The *causa*, the inward impellent motive or ground of justification, is the free grace of God; so in the text, 'justified freely by his grace.' Which Ambrose expounds, "not of the grace wrought within us, but the free grace of God." The first wheel that sets all the rest a-running, is the love and favour of God: 'being justified by his grace;' as a king freely pardons a delinquent. Justification is a mercy spun out of the bowels of free grace. God doth not justify us because we are worthy, but by justifying us makes us worthy.

*Q. What is the material cause, or that by which a sinner is justified?*

*Ans.* The matter of our justification, is Christ's satisfaction made to his Father. If it be asked, how can it stand with God's justice and holiness to pronounce us innocent when we are guilty? This answers it, Christ having made satisfaction for our fault, now God may, in equity and justice, pronounce us righteous. It is a just thing for a creditor to discharge a debtor of the debt, when a satisfaction is made by the surety.

*Q. But how was Christ's satisfaction meritorious, and so sufficient to justify?*

*Ans.* In respect of the divine nature: as he was man he suffered, as God he satisfied; by Christ's death and merits, God's justice is more abundantly satisfied, than if we had suffered the pains of hell for ever.

*Q. Wherein lies the formality or essence of our justification?*

*Ans.* In the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, Jer. xxiii. 6. 'This is the name whereby he shall be called *Jehovah Tsidkennu*,' 'THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS,' 2 Cor i. 40. 'He is made to us righteousness.' This righteousness of Christ, which doth justify us, is better righteousness than the angels; there's is the righteousness of creatures, this of God.

*Q. What is the means or instrument of our justification?*

*Ans.* Faith, Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith.' The dig-  
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nity is not in faith as a grace, but relatively, as it lays hold on Christ's merits.

*Q. What is the efficient cause of our justification?*

*Ans.* The whole Trinity, all the persons in the blessed Trinity have an hand in the justification of a sinner: *opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*. God the Father is said to justify, Rom. viii. 33. 'It is God that justifieth.' God the Son is said to justify, Acts xiii. 39. 'By him all that believe are justified.' God the Holy Ghost is said to justify, 1 Cor. vi. 11. 'But ye are justified by the Spirit of our God.' God the Father justifies, as he pronounceth us righteous: God the Son justifies as he imputes his righteousness to us; and God the Holy Ghost justifies, as he clears up our justification, and seals us up to the day of redemption.

*Q. What is the end of our justification?*

*Ans.* The end is, 1. That God may inherit praise, Eph. i. 6. 'To the praise of the glory of his grace.' Hereby God raiseth the everlasting trophies of his own honour: how will the justified sinner proclaim the love of God, and make heaven ring of his praises?

2. That the justified person may inherit glory, Rom. viii. 30. 'Whom he justified, them he also glorified.' God, in justifying, doth not only absolve a soul from guilt, but advance him to dignity; as Joseph was not only loosed from prison, but made lord of the kingdom. Justification is crowned with glorification.

*Q. Whether are we justified from eternity?*

*Ans.* No: for 1. By nature we are under a sentence of condemnation, John iii. 18. But we could not be at all condemned, if we were justified from eternity.

2. The scripture confines justification to those who believe and repent, Acts iii. 19. 'Repent that your sins may be blotted out.' Therefore their sins were uncanceled, and their persons unjustified, till they did repent: Though God doth not justify us for our repentance, yet not without it. The Antinomians erroneously hold, that we are justified from eternity. This doctrine is a key which opens the door to all licentiousness; what sins do they care they commit, so long as they hold they are, *ab æterno*, justified, whether they repent or not?

Before I come to the uses, I shall lay down four maxims or positions about justification.

*Position 1.* That justification confers a real benefit upon the person justified. The acquitting and discharging of the debtor, by virtue of the satisfaction made by the surety, is a real benefit to the debtor; a robe of righteousness, and a crown of righteousness, are real benefits.

*Position 2.* All believers are alike justified; *justificatio non recipit majus et minus*: though there are degrees in grace, yet



not in justification ; one is not justified more than another, the weakest believer is as perfectly justified as the strongest ; Mary Magdalene is as much justified as the Virgin-Mary. This may be cordial-water to a weak believer ; though thou hast but a drachm of faith, thou art as truly justified as he who is of the highest stature in Christ.

*Position 3.* Whosoever God justifies, he sanctifies, 1. Cor. vi. 11. ' But ye are sanctified, but ye are justified.' The Papists calumniate the Protestants ; they report, we hold that men continuing in sin are justified ; whereas all our protestant writers affirm, that righteousness imputed, viz. Justification, and righteousness inherent, viz. Sanctification, must be inseparably united. Holiness indeed is not the cause of our justification, but it is the concomitant ; the heat in the sun is not the cause of its light, but it is the concomitant. It is absurd to imagine, that God should justify a people, and they go on in sin. If God should justify a people and not sanctify them, he should justify a people whom he could not glorify. God, as he is an holy God, cannot lay a sinner in his bosom. The metal is first refined, before the king's stamp is put upon it : first, the soul is refined with holiness, before God puts the royal stamp of justification upon it.

*Position 4.* Justification is *inamissibilis* ; it is a fixed permanent thing, it can never be lost. The Arminians hold an apostacy from justification : to-day justified, to-morrow unjustified ; to-day a Peter, to-morrow a Judas ; to-day a member of Christ, to-morrow a limb of Satan : a most uncomfortable doctrine. Indeed justified persons may fall from degrees of grace, they may leave their first love, they may lose God's favour for a time, but not lose their justification. If they are justified, then they are elected ; they can no more fall from their justification, than from their election. If they are justified, then they have union with Christ ; and, can a member of Christ be broken off ? If one justified person may fall away from Christ, then all may ; and to Christ should be an head without a body.

*Use 1.* See from hence, that there is nothing within us could justify us, but something without us ; not any righteousness inherent, but imputed : we may as well look for a star in the earth, as for justification in our own righteousness. The papists say we are justified by works. But the apostle confutes it, ' not of works, lest any man should boast,' Eph. ii. 9. But the papists say " the works done by an unregenerate man indeed cannot justify him, but works done by a regenerate man may justify." This is most false, as may be proved both by example and reason.

1. By example. Abraham was a regenerate man ; but Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith, Rom. iv. 3.

Abraham 'believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.'

2. By reason. How can those works justify us, which defile us? Isa. lxiv. 6. 'Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' *Bona opera non præcedunt justificationem, sed sequuntur justificatum*: good works are not an usher to go before justification, but an hand-maid to follow it.

Obj. But doth not the apostle James say, Abraham was justified by works?

A. The answer is easy: works declare us to be righteous before men, but they do not make us righteous before God. Works are evidences of our justification, not causes. This name only must be graven upon the golden plate of our High Priest Christ, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

2d Use, of Exhortation. Branch 1. Adore the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, to find out such a way to justify us by 'rich grace and precious blood.' We were all involved in guilt; none of us could plead *not guilty*; and being guilty, we lay under a sentence of death: now that the judge himself should find out a way to justify us, and the creditor himself contrive a way to have the debt paid, and not distress the debtor; this may fill us with wonder and love. The angels admire the mystery of free grace in this new way of justifying and saving lost man, 1 Pet. i. 12. and should not we, who are nearly concerned in it, and on whom the benefit is devolved, cry out with the apostle, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' &c.

Branch. 2. Labour for this high privilege of justification: there is balm in Gilead; Christ hath laid down the price of our justification, viz. his blood; and he offers himself and all his merits to us, to justify; he invites us to come to him; he hath promised to give his Spirit, to enable us to do what is required. Why then, sinners, will ye not look after this great privilege of justification? Do not starve in the midst of plenty; do not perish when there is a remedy to save you. Would not he be thought to be distracted, if having a pardon offered him, only upon the acknowledgment of his fault, and promising amendment, he should bid the prince keep his pardon to himself; for his part, he was in love with his chains and fetters, and would die? Thou who neglectest justification offered thee freely by Christ in the gospel, art this distracted person. Is the love of Christ to be slighted? Is thy soul and heaven worth nothing? O then look after justification through Christ's blood!

Consider, 1. The necessity of being justified: if we are not justified, we cannot be glorified, Rom. viii. 30. 'Whom he justified, them he also glorified.' He who is outlawed, and all his goods confiscated, must be brought into favour with his

prince, before he can be restored to his former rights and liberties: so we must first have our sins forgiven, and be brought into God's favour by justification, before we can be restored to the liberty of the sons of God, and have right to that happiness we have forfeited in Adam.

2. The utility and benefit: by justification we enjoy peace in our conscience; a richer jewel than any prince wears in his crown, Rom. v. 1. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' Peace can sweeten all our afflictions, it turns our water into wine. How happy is a justified person who hath the power of God to guard him, and the peace of God to comfort him? Peace flowing from justification, is an antidote against the fear of death and hell, Rom. viii. 34. 'It is God that justifies, who is he that condemneth?' Therefore labour for this justification by Christ; this privilege is obtained by believing in Christ, Acts xiii. 39. 'By him all that believe are justified.' And Rom. iii. 25. 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' Faith unites us to Christ; and having union with his person, we partake of his merits and the glorious salvation which comes by him.

*Use* 3. Comfort to the justified, (1.) It is comfort in case of failings: alas! how defective are the godly! they come short in every duty: but though believers should be humbled under their defects, yet not desponded; they are not to be justified by their duties or graces, but the righteousness of Christ. Their duties are mixed with sin, but that righteousness which justifies them is a perfect righteousness.

(2.) Comfort in case of hard censures: the world censures the people of God for proud and hypocritical, and the troublers of Israel; but though men censure and condemn the godly; yet God hath justified them, and as he hath now justified them, so at the day of judgment he will openly justify them, and pronounce them righteous before men and angels. And God is so just and holy a judge, that having once justified his people, he will never condemn them. Pilate justified Christ, 'I find no fault in him;' yet after this he condemned him: but God having publicly justified his saints, he will never condemn them; 'whom he justified, them he also glorified.'



## OF ADOPTION.

JOHN i. 12. *To them gave he power to become the sons of God.*

HAVING spoken of the great points of faith and justification, the next is adoption.

1. The qualification of the persons. ‘As many as received him.’ Receiving is put for believing, as is clear by the last words, ‘to them that believe in his name.’

2 The specification of the privilege; ‘to them he gave power to become the sons of God.’ The Greek word for power, *exusia*, signifies dignity and prerogative; he dignified them to become the sons of God.

Our sonship differs from Christ’s sonship; Christ was the son of God by eternal generation, a son before time; but our sonship is, 1. By creation, Acts xvii. 28. ‘We are his offspring.’ This is no privilege; men may have God for their father by creation, yet have the devil for their father.

2. Our sonship is by adoption: so in the text, ‘He gave them power to become the sons of God.’ Adoption is two-fold.

(1.) *External and federal*: so those who live in a visible church, and make a profession of God, are sons, Matth. viii. 12. ‘The children of the kingdom shall be cast out.’

(2.) *Real and gracious*: so they are sons, who are God’s favourites, and are heirs of glory. Before I proceed to the questions, I shall lay down three positions.

*Position 1.* Adoption takes in all nations: at first adoption was confined to the people of the Jews, they only were grafted into the true olive, and were dignified with glorious privileges, Rom. ix. 4. ‘Who are Israelites: to whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory.’ But now, in the time of the gospel, the charter is enlarged, and the believing Gentiles are within the line of communication, and have a right to the privileges of adoption as well as the Jews, Acts x. 35. ‘in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.’

*Position 2.* Adoption takes in both sexes, females as well as males, 2 Cor. vi. 18. ‘I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters.’ I have read, in some countries, females are excluded from the supreme dignity: as by the Salique law in France, no woman can inherit a crown: but,

if we speak of spiritual privileges, females are as capable as males. Every gracious soul (of whatever sex) lays claim to adoption, and hath an interest in God as a father: 'ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.'

*Position 3.* Adoption is an act of pure grace. Eph. i. 5. 'Having predestinated us to the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of his will.' Adoption is a mercy spun out of the bowels of free grace: all by nature are strangers, therefore have no right to sonship; only God is pleased to adopt one, and not another; to make one a vessel of glory, another a vessel of wrath. The adopted heir may cry out, 'Lord, how is it, that thou wilt shew thyself to me, and not unto the world?'

*Q. What this filiation or adoption is?*

*Ans.* Adoption is the taking a stranger into the relation of a son and heir: so Moses was the adopted son of king Pharaoh's daughter, Exod. ii. 10. And Esther was the adopted child of her uncle Mordecai, Esth. ii. 7. Thus God adopts us into the family of heaven; and God, in adopting us, doth two things:

1. He ennobles us with his name: he who is adopted, bears his name who adopts him, Rev. iii. 12. 'I will write on him the name of my God.'

2. God consecrates us with his Spirit: whom he adopts, he anoints; whom he makes sons, he makes saints. When a man adopts another for his son and heir, he may put his name upon him, but he cannot put his disposition into him; if he be a morose rugged nature, he cannot alter it; but whom God adopts he sanctifies: he doth not only give them a new name, but a new nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. God turns the wolf into a lamb; he makes the heart humble and gracious; he works such a change as if another soul did dwell in the same body.

*Q. From what state doth God take us when he adopts us?*

*Ans.* From a state of sin and misery. King Pharaoh's daughter took Moses out of the ark of bulrushes in the water, and adopted him for her son. God did not take us out of the water, but out of our blood, and adopted us, Ezek. xvi. God adopted us from slavery: it is a mercy to redeem a slave, but is it more to adopt him.

*Q. To what God adopts us?*

*Ans.* He adopts us to a state of excellency. It were much for God to take a clod of dust, and make it a star; it is more for God to take a piece of clay and sin, and adopt it for his heir.

1. God adopts us to a state of liberty. Adoption is a state of freedom; a slave being adopted, is made a freeman, Gal. iv. 7. 'Thou art no more a servant, but a son.'

**Q.** *How is an adopted Son free ?*

*Ans.* (1.) Not to do what he lists : he is free from the dominion of sin, the tyranny of Satan, the curse of the law.

2. He is free in the manner of worship ; he hath God's free Spirit, which makes him free and chearful in the service of God ; he is ' joyful in the house of prayer,' Isa. lvi. 7.

(2.) God adopts us to a state of dignity : God makes us heirs of promise ; God installs us into honour, Isa. xliii. 4. ' Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable.' The adopted are God's treasure, Exod. xix. 5. His jewels, Mal. iii. 17. His first-born, Heb. xii. 23. They have angels for their life-guard, Heb. i. 14. They are of the blood-royal of heaven, 1 John iii. 9. The scripture hath set forth their spiritual heraldry ; they have their escutcheon or coat-armour ; sometimes they give the lion for their courage, Prov. xxviii. 1. Sometimes the dove for their meekness, Cant. ii. 14. Sometimes the eagle for their sublimeness, Isa. xi. 31. Thus you see their coat of arms displayed : but what is honour without inheritance ? God adopts all his sons to an inheritance, Luke xii. 32. ' It is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.' It is no disparagement to be the sons of God. To reproach the saints, is as if Shimei had reproached David when he was going to be made king ; adoption ends in coronation. The kingdom God gives his adopted sons and heirs, excels all earthly monarchies.

1. In riches, Rev. xxi. 21. The gates of pearl, and the streets of pure gold, and as it were transparent glass.

2. In tranquility. It is peaceable, the white lily of peace is the best flower in a prince's crown : *Pax una triumphis innumeris melior*. No divisions at home, or invasions abroad ; no more the noise of the drum or cannon, but the voice of harpers harping, the hieroglyphic of peace, Rev. xiv. 2.

3. In stability. Other kingdoms are corruptible ; though they have heads of gold, yet feet of clay : but this kingdom into which the saints are adopted, runs parallel with eternity : it is a kingdom that cannot be shaken, Heb. xii. 28. The heirs of heaven reign for ever and ever, Rev. xxii. 5.

**Q.** *What is the organical or instrumental cause of adoption ?*

*A.* Faith interests us in the privilege of adoption, Gal. iii. 26. ' Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.' Before faith be wrought, we are spiritually illegitimate, we have no relation to God as a father : an unbeliever may call God judge, but not father ; faith is the filiating grace, it confers upon us the title of sonship, and gives us right to inherit.

**Q.** *Why is faith the instrument of adoption, more than any other grace ?*



*Ans.* 1. Faith is a quickening grace, it is the vital artery of the soul, Hab. ii. 4. 'The just shall live by faith.' Life makes us capable of adoption, dead children are never adopted.

2. Faith makes us Christ's brethren, and so God comes to be our father.

*Use 1<sup>st</sup>, Branch 1.* See the amazing love of God in making us his sons. Plato gave God thanks that he had made him a man, and not only a man but a philosopher: but it is infinitely more, that he should invest us with the prerogative of sons. It is love in God to feed us, but more to adopt us, 1 John iii. 1. 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!' It is an *ecce admirantis*, a behold of wonder.

The wonder of God's love in adopting us, will appear the more if we consider these six things.

1. That God should adopt us when he had a son of his own. Men adopt because they want children, and desire to have some to bear their name: but that God should adopt us when he had a son of his own, the Lord Jesus; here is the wonder of love. Christ is called 'God's dear son,' Col. i. 13. 'A son more worthy than the angels,' Heb. i. 4. 'Being made so much better than the angels.' Now, when God had a son of his own, such a son, here is the wonder of God's love in adopting us. We needed a Father, but he did not need sons.

2. Consider what we were before God did adopt us: we were very deformed; a man will scarce adopt him for his heir that is crooked and ill-favoured, but that hath some beauty. Mordecai adopted Esther, because she was fair. But we were in our blood, and then God adopted us, Ezek. xvi. 6. 'When I saw thee polluted in thy blood, it was the time of love.' God did not adopt us when we were bespangled with the jewels of holiness, and had the angels glory upon us; but when we were black as Ethiopians, diseased as lepers, then it was the time of love.

3. That God should be at so great expence in adopting us: when men adopt, they have only some deed sealed, and the thing is effected; but when God adopts, it puts him to a far greater expence, it sets his wisdom a-work to find out a way to adopt us; it was no easy thing to make the heirs of wrath, heirs of the promise. And when God had found out a way to adopt, it was no easy way; our adoption was purchased at a dear rate; when God was about to make us sons and heirs, he could not seal the deed but by the blood of his own Son. Here is the wonder of God's love in adopting us, that he should be at all this expence to bring this work about.

4. That God should adopt his enemies; if a man adopts

another for his heir, he will not adopt his mortal enemy ; but that God should adopt us, when we were not only strangers, but enemies, here is the wonder of love, for God to have pardoned his enemies, had been much ; but to adopt them for his heirs, this sets the angels in heaven a-wondering.

5. That God should take great numbers out of the devil's family, and adopt them into the family of heaven. Christ is said to bring many sons to glory, Heb. ii. 10. Men adopt usually but one heir, but God is resolved to increase his family, he brings many sons to glory. God's adopting millions, is the wonder of love. Had but one been adopted, all of us might have despaired ; but he brings many sons to glory, this opens a door of hope to us.

6. That God should confer so great honour upon us, in adopting us : David thought it no small honour that he should be a king's son-in-law, 1 Sam. xviii. 18. But what honour to be the sons of the high God ? And the more honour God hath put upon us in adopting us, the more he hath magnified his love towards us, What honour, that God hath made us so near in alliance to him, sons of God the Father, members of God the Son, temples of God the Holy Ghost ? that he hath made us as the angels, Matth. xxii. 30. nay, in some sense, superior to the angels : all proclaims the wonder of God's love in adopting us.

*Branch 2.* See the sad condition of such as live and die in unbelief ; they are not the sons of God : ' To as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name.' No faith, no sonship ; unbelievers have no sign of sonship, they know not God ; all God's children know their Father, but the wicked do not know him, Jer. ix. 3. ' They proceed from evil to evil, and know not me, saith the Lord.' Unbelievers are ' dead in trespasses,' Eph. ii. 1. God hath no dead children ; and not being children, they have no right to inherit.

*2d Use of trial.* Try whether we are adopted. All the world is divided into these two ranks, either the sons of God, or the heirs of hell, John i. 12. ' To them he gave power to become the sons of God.' Let us put ourselves on a trial. It is no sign we are adopted sons, because we are sons of godly parents: the Jews boasted that they were of Abraham's seed, John viii. 33. they thought they must needs be good, because they came of such an holy line. But adoption doth not come by blood : we see many godly parents have wicked sons ; Abraham had an Ishmael ; Isaac an Esau. The corn that is sown pure, yet brings forth grain with an husk ? he who himself is holy, yet the child that springs from his loins is unholy. So that, as Hierom, *non nascimur filii*: we are not God's sons as we are

born of godly parents, but by adoption and grace. Well, then, let us try if we are the adopted sons and daughters of God.

First sign of adoption, *obedience*. A son obeys his father, Jer. xxxv. 5. 'I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites, pots full of wine, and cups, and said unto them, drink ye wine. But they said, we will drink no wine : for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, ye shall drink no wine.' So, when God saith, drink not in sin's enchanted cup ; an adopted child saith, my heavenly Father hath commanded me, I dare not drink. A gracious soul doth not only believe God's promise, but obey his command. And true child-like obedience must be regular, which implies three things :

1. It must be done by a right rule : obedience must have the word for its rule ; *Lydius lapis*, Isa. viii. 20. 'To the law, to the testimony.' If our obedience be not according to the word, it is offering up strange fire ; it is will-worship : and God will say, who hath required this at your hand ? the apostle condemns worshipping of angels, which had a shew of humility, Col. ii. 18. The Jews might say, that they were loth to be so bold, as to go to God in their own persons ; they would be more humble, and prostrate themselves before the angels, desiring them to be their mediators to God. Here was a shew of humility in their angel-worship ; but it was abominable, because they had no word of God to warrant it : it was not obedience, but idolatry. Child-like obedience is that which is consonant to our Father's revealed will.

2. It must be done from a right principle, *i. e.* the noble principle of faith, Rom. xvi. 26. 'The obedience of faith'—*Quicquid decorum est ex fide proficissitur*, Aug. A crab-tree may bear fruit fair to the eye, but it is sour, because it doth not come from a good root. A moral person may give God outward obedience, and to the eyes of others it seems glorious ; but his obedience is sour, because it comes not from that sweet and pleasant root of faith. A child of God gives him the obedience of faith, and that meliorates and sweetens his services, and makes them come off with a better relish, Heb. xi. 4. 'By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain.'

3. It must be done to a right end : *Finis specificat actionem* ; the end of obedience is glorifying God. That which hath spoiled many glorious services, is, when the end hath been wrong, Mat. vi. 2. 'When thou dost thine alms, do not sound a trumpet, as the hypocrites do, that they may have glory of men.' Good works should shine, but not blaze. 'If I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profits me nothing,' 1 Cor. xiii. 3. The same I may say of a sincere aim ; if I obey never so much, and have not a sincere aim, it profits



me nothing. True obedience looks at God in all, Phil. i. 20. 'That Christ may be magnified.' Though a child of God shoots short, yet he takes a right aim.

(2.) True child-like obedience is uniform: a child of God makes conscience of one command, as well as another: *Quicquid propter Deum fit, æqualiter fit*—All God's commands have the same stamp of divine authority upon them; and if I obey one precept because my heavenly Father commands me, then by the same rule I must obey all: as the blood runs through all the veins of the body, and the sun in the firmament runs through all the signs of the zodiac: so the true child-like obedience runs through the first and second table, Psal. cxix. 6. 'When I have a respect unto all thy commandments.' To obey God in some things of religion, and not in others, shews an unsound heart; like Esau, who obeyed his father in bringing him venison, but not in a greater matter, viz. the choice of his wife. Child-like obedience moves towards every command of God, as the needle points that way which the loadstone draws. If God call to duties which are cross to flesh and blood, if we are children, we obey our Father.

Q. *But who can obey God in all things?*

A. An adopted heir of heaven, though he cannot obey every precept perfectly, yet he doth evangelically: 1. He approves of every command, Rom. vii. 16. 'I consent to the law, that it is good.' 2. A child of God delights in every command, Psal. cxix. 97. 'O how love I thy precepts!' 3. His desire is to obey every command, Psal. cxix. 5. 'O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!' 4. Wherein he comes short, he looks up to Christ's blood to make supply for his defects. This is evangelical obedience; which, though it be not to satisfaction, it is to acceptance.

(3.) True child-like obedience is constant, Psal. cvi. 3. 'Blessed is he that doth righteousness at all times.' Child-like obedience is not like an high colour in a fit, which is soon over; but like a right sanguine complexion, it abides; it is like the fire on the altar which was kept always burning, Lev. vi. 13.

Second sign of adoption, to love to be in our Father's presence. The child who loves his Father, is never so well as when he is near his father. Are we children? we love the presence of God in his ordinances. In prayer we speak to God, in the preaching of his word he speaks to us: and how doth every child of God delight to hear his Father's voice? Psal. lxxiii. 1, 2. 'My soul thirsteth for thee, to see thy glory so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.' Such as disregard ordinances, are not God's children, because they care not to be in God's presence: Gen. iv. 17. 'Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.' Not that he could go out of God's sight, but the meaning is,

“Cain went out from the church and people of God, where the Lord gave visible tokens of his presence.”

Third sign of adoption, to have the conduct of God's Spirit, Rom. viii. 24, ‘As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.’ It is not enough that the child have life, but it must be led every step by the nurse: so the adopted child must not only be born of God, but have the manuduction of the Spirit to lead him in a course of holiness, Hos. xi. 3. ‘I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms.’ As Israel was led by the pillar of fire, so God's children are led by the conduct of his Spirit: the adopted ones need God's Spirit to lead them, they are apt to go wrong. The fleshly part inclines to sin; the understanding and conscience are to guide the will, but the will is imperious and rebels; therefore God's children need the Spirit to check corruption, and lead them in the right way. As wicked men are led by the evil spirit; the spirit of Satan led Herod to incest, Ahab to murder, Judas to treason: so the good Spirit leads God's children into virtuous actions.

Obj. *But enthusiasts pretend to be led by the Spirit, when it is an ignis fatuus, a delusion.*

A. The Spirit's conduct is agreeable to the word; enthusiasts leave the word, ‘The word is truth,’ John xvi. 13. And, ‘the Spirit guides in all truth,’ John xvi. 13. The word's teaching, and the Spirit's leading agree together.

Fourth sign, if we are adopted, we have an entire love to all God's children, 1 Peter ii. 17. ‘Love the brotherhood.’ We bear affection to God's children, though they have some infirmities: there are the spots of God's children, Deut. xxxii. 5. But we must love the beautiful face of holiness, though it hath a scar in it. If we are adopted, we love the good we see in God's children, we admire their graces, we pass by their imprudencies: if we cannot love them, because they have some failings, how do we think God can love us? can we plead exemption? By these signs we may know our adoption.

Q. *What are the benefits which accrue to God's children:*

A. They have great immunities: King's children have great privileges and freedoms; they do not pay custom, Matth. xvii. 6. God's children are privileged persons, they are privileged from the hurt of every thing, Luke x. 19. ‘Nothing shall by any means hurt you.’ Hit you it may, not hurt you, Psalm xci. 10. ‘There shall no evil befall thee.’ God saith not, No affliction shall befall his children, but, No evil; the hurt and poison of it is taken away. Affliction to a wicked man hath evil in it, it makes him worse; it makes him curse and blaspheme, Rev. xvi. 9. ‘Men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God.’ but no evil befalls a child of God,

he is bettered by affliction, Heb. xii. 10. The furnace make gold purer. Again, no evil befalls the adopted, because no condemnation. Rom. viii. 33. 'It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?' What a blessed privilege is this, to be freed from the sting of affliction, and the curse of the law? to be in such a condition, that nothing can hurt one? When the dragon hath poisoned the water, the unicorn with his horn doth extract and draw out the poison; so Jesus Christ hath drawn out the poison of every affliction, that it cannot prejudice the saints.

Second benefit, if we are adopted, then we have an interest in all the promises: the promises are children's bread: 'Believers are heirs of the promises,' Heb. vi. 17. The promises are sure: God's truth, which is the brightest pearl in his crown, is laid to pawn in a promise. The promises are suitable; like a physic-garden, there is no disease, but there is some herb in the physic-garden to cure it. In the dark of desertion, God hath promised to be a sun; in temptation, to tread down Satan, Rom. xvi. 20. Doth sin prevail? he hath promised to take away its kingly power, Rom. vi. 14. O the heavenly comforts which are distilled from the limbec of the promises! But who hath a right to these? Believers only are heirs of the promise. There is never a promise in the Bible, but a believer may say, this is mine.

*Use ult.* Extol and magnify God's mercy, who hath adopted you into his family; who, of slaves, hath made you sons; of heirs of hell, heirs of the promise. Adoption is a free gift. He gave them power, or dignity, to become the sons of God. As a thread of silver runs through the whole piece of work, so free grace runs through this whole privilege of adoption. Adoption is a greater mercy than Adam had in paradise; he was a son by creation, but here is a further sonship by adoption. To make us thankful, consider, in civil adoption there is some worth and excellency in the person to be adopted; but there was no worth in us, neither beauty, nor parentage, nor virtue; nothing in us to move God to bestow the prerogative of sonship upon us. We have enough in us to move God to correct us, but nothing to move him to adopt us; therefore exalt free grace, begin the work of angels here; bless him with your praises, who hath blessed you in making you his sons and daughters.



## OF SANCTIFICATION.

1 THESS. iv. 3. *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.*

THE notion of the word sanctification, signifies to consecrate and set apart to an holy use: thus they are sanctified persons, who are separated from the world, and set apart for God's service. Sanctification hath a privative and a positive part.

1. A privative part, mortification, which lies in the purging out of sin. Sin is compared to leaven, which sours; and to leprosy, which defiles; sanctification doth purge out 'the old leaven,' 1 Cor. ix. 7. Though it takes not away the life, yet it takes away the love of sin.

2. A positive part, vivification, which is the spiritual refining of the soul; which in scripture is called a 'renewing of our mind,' Rom. xii. 2. and a 'partaking of the divine nature,' 2 Pet. i. 4. The priests in the law not only were washed in the great laver, but adorned with glorious apparel, Exod. xxviii. 2. so in sanctification, not only washed from sin, but adorned with purity.

*Q. What is sanctification?*

*Ans.* It is a principle of grace savingly wrought, whereby the heart becomes holy, and is made after God's own heart. A sanctified person bears not only God's name, but image. For the opening the nature of sanctification, I shall lay down these seven positions.

1. Sanctification is a supernatural thing: it is divinely infused. We are naturally polluted, and to cleanse, God takes to be his prerogative; Lev. xxi. 8. 'I am the Lord which sanctifieth you.' Weeds grow of themselves. Flowers are planted. Sanctification is a flower of the Spirit's planting, therefore it is called, The sanctification of the Spirit,' 1 Peteri. 2.

2. Sanctification is an intrinsecal thing: it lies chiefly in the heart. It is called 'the adorning the hidden man of the heart,' 1 Peter iii. 4. The dew wets the leaf, the sap is hid in the root: the religion of some consists only in externals, but sanctification is deeply rooted in the soul, Psal. li. 6. 'In the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.'

3. Sanctification is an extensive thing: it spreads into the whole man, 1 Theff. v. 23. 'The God of peace sanctify you wholly.' As original corruption hath depraved all the faculties, the whole 'head is sick, the whole heart faint,' no part sound, as if the whole mass of blood were corrupted: so sanctification goes over the whole soul. After the fall, there was ignorance

in the mind ; now in sanctification, we are ‘ light in the Lord,’ Eph. v. 8. After the fall, the will was depraved : there was not only impotency to good, but obstinacy : now, in sanctification, there is a blessed pliability in the will ; it doth symbolize and comport with the will of God. After the fall, the affections were misplaced on wrong objects ; in sanctification, they are turned into a sweet order and harmony, the grief placed on sin, the love on God, the joy on heaven. Thus sanctification spreads itself as far as original corruption : it goes over the whole soul ; ‘ the God of peace sanctify you wholly.’ He is not a sanctified person who is good only in some part, but who is all over sanctified : therefore in scripture, grace is called a ‘ new man,’ Col. iii. 10. not a new eye or a new tongue, but a ‘ new man.’ A good Christian, though he be sanctified but in part, yet in every part.

4. Sanctification is an intense ardent thing, *Qualitatis sunt in subjectio intense*, Rom. xii. 11. ‘ Fervent in Spirit.’ Sanctification is not a dead form, but it is inflamed into zeal. We call water hot, when it is so in the third or fourth degree : he is holy, whose religion is heated to some degree, and his heart boils over in love to God.

5. Sanctification is a beautiful thing ; it makes God and angels fall in love with us, Psal. cx. 3. ‘ The beauties of holiness.’ As the sun is to the world, so is sanctification to the soul, beautifying and bespangling it in God’s eyes. That which makes God glorious, must needs make us so. Holiness is the most sparkling jewel in the Godhead, Exod. xv. 11. ‘ Glorious in holiness.’ Sanctification is the first fruit of the Spirit ; it is heaven begun in the soul ; sanctification and glory differ only in degree ; sanctification is glory in the seed, and glory is sanctification in the flower. Holiness is the quintessence of happiness.

6. Sanctification is an abiding thing, 1 John iii. 9. ‘ His seed remaineth in him.’ He who is truly sanctified cannot fall from that state. Indeed seeming holiness may be lost, colours may wash off, sanctification may suffer an eclipse, Rev. ii. 4. ‘ Thou hast left thy first love :’ but true sanctification is a blossom of eternity, 1 John ii. 27. ‘ The anointing which ye have received abideth in you.’ He who is truly sanctified, can no more fall away, than the angels which are fixed in their heavenly orbs.

7. Sanctification is a progressive thing, it is growing ; it is compared to seed which grows ; first the blade springs up, then the ear, then the ripe corn in the ear ; such as are already sanctified, may be more sanctified, 2 Cor vii. 1. Justification doth not admit of degrees ; a believer cannot be more elected or justified than he is, but he may be more sanctified than he is : sanctification is still increasing, like the morning sun, which

grows brighter to the full meridian. Knowledge is said to increase, Col. i. 10. and faith to increase, 2 Cor. x. 15. A Christian is continually adding a cubit to his spiritual stature. It is not with us as it was with Christ, who received the Spirit without measure : Christ could not be more holy than he was. But we have the Spirit only in measure, and may be still augmenting our grace : As Appelles, when he had drawn a picture, he would be still mending it with his pencil. The image of God is drawn but imperfectly in us, therefore we must be still mending it, and drawing it in more lively colours ; sanctification is progressive ; if it doth not grow, it is because it doth not live. Thus you see the nature of sanctification.

*Q. What are the counterfeits of sanctification ?*

*A.* There is something looks like sanctification, which is not.

1. The first counterfeit of sanctification is moral virtue. To be just, temperate, to be of a fair deportment, not having one's scutcheon blotted with ignominious scandal : this is good but not enough : this is not sanctification. A field flower differs from a garden flower : 1. Heathens have attained to morality ; Cato, Socrates, Aristides. Civility is but nature refined ; there is nothing of Christ there ; the heart may be foul and impure : under these fair leaves of civility, the worm of unbelief may be hid. 2. A moral person hath a secret antipathy against grace ; he hates vice, and he hates grace as much as vice. The snake hath a fine colour, but a sting. A person adorned and cultivated with moral virtue, hath a secret spleen against sanctity : those Stoics, which were the chief of the moralized Heathens, were the bitterest enemies St. Paul had, Acts xvii. 18.

2. The second counterfeit of sanctification, is superstitious devotion : this abounds in Popery, adorations, images, altars, vestments, holy water, which I look upon as a religious frenzy ; this is far from sanctification. 1. It doth not put any intrinsecal goodness into a man, it doth not make a man better. If the legal purifications and washings, which were of God's own appointing, did not make them that used them more holy, (the priests, who wore holy garments, and had holy oil poured on them, were never the more holy, without the anointing of the Spirit) then surely those superstitious innovations in religion, which God never appointed, cannot contribute any holiness to men. 2. A superstitious holiness costs no great labour ; there is nothing of the heart in it ; if to tell over a few beads, or bow to an image, to sprinkle themselves with holy water ; if this were sanctification, and were all that were required of them that should be saved, then hell would be empty, none would come there.

3. The third counterfeit of sanctification, is hypocrisy ; when men make a pretence of that holiness which they have not.



A comet may shine like a star ; such a lustre shines from their profession, as dazzleth the eyes of the beholders, 2 Tim. iii. 5. ' Having a form of godliness, but denying the power.' These are lamps without oil ; whited sepulchres, like the Egyptian temples, which had fair outsides, but within spiders and apes. The apostle speaks of true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. implying that there is holiness which is spurious and feigned, Rev. iii. 1. ' Thou hast a name to live, but art dead : ' like pictures and statues which are destitute of a vital principle, Jude xii. ' Clouds without water.' They pretend to be full of the Spirit, but empty clouds. This shew of sanctification (when it is nothing else) is self-delusion. He who takes copper instead of gold, wrongs himself ; the most counterfeit saint deceives others while he lives, but deceives himself when he dies. To pretend holiness, when there is none, is a vain thing : what were the foolish virgins better for their blazing lamps, when they wanted oil ? What is the lamp of profession without the oil of saving grace ? What comfort will a shew of holiness yield at last ? Will painted gold enrich ? Painted wine refresh him that is thirsty ? Will painted holiness be a cordial at the hour of death ? A pretence of sanctification is not to be rested in. Many ships, that have had the name of the Hope, the Safeguard, the Triumph, yet have been cast away upon the rocks ; so, many who have had the name of saintship, have been cast into hell.

4. The fourth counterfeit of sanctification, is restraining grace. When men forbear vice, though they do not hate it ; this may be the sinner's motto, ' Fain I would, but I dare not.' The dog hath a mind to the bone, but is afraid of the cudgel ; men have a mind to lust, but conscience stands as the angel, with a flaming sword, and affrights ; they have a mind to revenge, but the fear of hell is a curb-bit to check them. Here is no change of heart ; sin is curbed, but not cured ; a lion may be in chains, but is a lion still.

4. The fifth counterfeit of sanctification, is common grace, which is a slight, transient work of the Spirit, but doth not amount to conversion. There is some light in the judgment, but it is not humbling ; some checks in the conscience, but they are not awakening : this looks like sanctification, but is not. Men have convictions wrought in them, but they break loose from them again, like the deer, which, being shot, shakes out the arrow : after conviction, men go into the house of mirth, take the harp to drive away the spirit of sadness, and so all dies and comes to nothing.

Q. *Wherein appears the necessity of sanctification ?*

A. In six things : 1. God hath called us to it, 2 Pet. i. 4. ' Who hath called us to glory and virtue ; ' to virtue as well as glory, ' God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto ho-

linefs,' 1 Theff. iv. 7. We have no call to fin, we may have a temptation, but no call; no call to be proud, or unclean, but we have a call to be holy.

2. The neceffity appears in this: without fanctification there is no evidencing our juftification; juftification and fanctification go together, 1 Cor. vi. 11. 'But ye are fanctified, but ye are juftified.' Mic. vii. 18. 'Pardoning iniquity,' there is juftification; ver. 19. 'He will fubdue our iniquities,' there is fanctification. 'Out of Chrift's fides came blood and water,' 1 John v. 7. Blood, viz. juftification; water, viz. fanctification. Such as have not the water out of Chrift's fides to cleanse them, fhall never have the blood out of his fides to fave them.

3. Without fanctification we have no title to the new covenant. The covenant of grace is our charter for heaven; the tenure of the covenant is, 'that God will be our God' (the crowning bleffing.) But who are interefted in the covenant, and may plead the benefit of it? Only fanctified perfons; Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 'A new heart will I give you, and I will put my Spirit within you, and I will be your God.' If a man makes a will, and fettles his eftate upon fuch perfons as he names in the will; none elfe but they can lay claim to the will: fo God makes a will and testament, but it is reftained and limited to fuch as are fanctified; and it is high prefumption for any elfe to lay claim to the will.

4. There is no going into heaven without fanctification, Heb. xii. 14. 'Without holinefs no man fhall fee the Lord.' God is an holy God, and he will fuffer no unholy creature to come near him; a king will not fuffer a man with plague-fores to approach into his prefence. Heaven is not like Noah's ark, where the clean beafts and the unclean entered; no unclean beaft comes into the heavenly ark: though God fuffer the wicked to live a while on the earth; he will never fuffer heaven to be peftled with fuch vermin: are they fit to fee God, who wallow in wickednefs? Will God ever lay fuch vipers in his bofom? 'Without holinefs no man fhall fee the Lord.' It muft be a clear eye that fees a bright object: only an holy heart can fee God in his glory. Sinners may fee God as an enemy, but not as a friend; may have an affrighting vifion of God, but not a beautiful vifion: they may fee the flaming fword, but not the mercy-feat. O then what need is there of fanctification?

5. Without fanctification, all our holy things are defiled, Tit. i. 5. 'Unto them that are defiled is nothing pure.' Under the law, if a man who was unclean by a dead body, had carried a piece of holy flefh in his firt, the holy flefh had not cleaned him, but he had polluted that, Hag. i. 12, 13. An emblem of a finner's polluting his holy offering. A foul ftro-

mach turns the best food into ill humours; an un sanctified heart pollutes prayers, alms, sacraments. This evinceth the necessity of sanctification: sanctification makes our holy things accepted; an holy heart is the altar which sanctifies the offering; his duties though they are not to satisfaction, yet to acceptance.

6. Without sanctification we can shew no sign of our election, 2 Thess. ii. 13. Election is the cause of our salvation, sanctification is our evidence; sanctification is the ear mark of Christ's elect sheep.

*Q. What are the signs of sanctification?*

*A.* 1. Such as are sanctified, can remember a time when they were un sanctified, Tit. iii. 3. We were in our blood, and then God washed us with water, and anointed us with oil, Ezek. xvi. 9. Those trees of righteousness that blossom and bear almonds, can remember when they were like Aaron's dry rod, not one blossom of holiness growing: a sanctified soul can remember when he was estranged from God through ignorance and vanity, and when free grace planted this flower of holiness in him.

Second sign of sanctification is the indwelling of the Spirit, 2 Tim. i. 14. 'The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.' As the unclean Spirit dwells in the wicked, and carries them to pride, lust, revenge; the devil hath entered into these swine, Acts v. 3. so the Spirit of God dwells in the elect, as their guide and comforter. The Spirit possesseth the saints. God's Spirit sanctifies the fancy, causing it to mint holy thoughts; it sanctifies the will, putting a new bias upon it, whereby it is inclined to good. He who is sanctified hath the influence of the Spirit, though not the essence.

The third sign of sanctification is an antipathy against sin, Psal. cxix. 104. an hypocrite may leave sin, yet love it; as a serpent casts its coat but keeps its sting: but a sanctified person can say, he not only leaves sin, but loathes it. As there are antipathies in nature, between the vine and laurel, so in a sanctified soul there is an holy antipathy against sin: and antipathies can never be reconciled. Because he hath an antipathy against sin, he cannot but oppose it, and seek the destruction of it.

Fourth sign of sanctification is, the spiritual performance of duties, viz. with the heart, and from a principle of love. The sanctified soul prays out of a love to prayer, he 'calls the sabbath a delight,' Isa. lviii. 13. A man may have gifts to admiration, he may speak as an angel dropped out of heaven, yet may be carnal in spiritual things; his services do not come from a renewed principle, nor is he carried upon the wings of delight in duty. A sanctified soul worships God in the Spirit,



1 Pet. ii. 5. God doth not judge of our duties by the length, but by the love.

Fifth sign, a well ordered life, 1 Pet. i. 15. 'Be ye holy in all manner of conversation:' Where the heart is sanctified the life will be so too; the temple had gold without, as well as within. As in a piece of coin, there is not only the king's image within the ring, but his superscription too without; so where there is sanctification, there is not only God's image in the heart, but a superscription of holiness written in the life; some say they have good hearts, but their lives are vicious, Prov. xxx. 12. 'There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, yet is not washed from their filthiness.' If the water be foul in the bucket, it cannot be clean in the well, Psal. xlv. 13. 'The king's daughter is all glorious within;' there is holiness of heart; 'her clothing is of wrought gold.' Holiness of life. Grace is most beautiful when its light doth so shine, that others may see it; this adorns religion, and makes profelytes to the faith.

Sixth sign, stedfast resolution. He is resolved never to part with his holiness; let others reproach it, he loves it the more; let water be sprinkled on the fire, it burns the more. He saith, as David, when Michal reproached him, for dancing before the ark, 2 Sam. vi. 22. 'If this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile.' Let others persecute him for his holiness, he saith as Paul, Acts xx. 24. 'None of those things move me;' he prefers sanctity before safety, and had rather keep his conscience pure, than his skin whole. He saith as Job, 'my integrity I will hold fast, and not let it go,' ch. xxvii. 6. He will rather part with his life than his conscience.

Use 1. See what is the main thing a Christian should look after, viz. sanctification; this is the *unum necessarium*, the one thing needful. Sanctification is our purest complexion, it makes us as the heaven, bespangled with stars; it is our nobility, by it we are born of God, and partake of the divine nature: it is our riches, therefore compared to rows of jewels, and chains of gold, Cant. i. 10. It is our best certificate for heaven: what evidence have we else to shew? Have we knowledge? so hath the devil: do we profess religion? Satan often appears in Samuel's mantle, and transforms himself into an angel of light: but here is our certificate to shew for heaven, sanctification. Sanctification is the first fruits of the Spirit; the only coin will pass current in the other world. Sanctification is the evidence of God's love; we cannot guess of God's love by giving us health, riches, success, but by drawing his image of sanctification on us by the pencil of the Holy Ghost.

Branch 2. It shews the misery of such as are destitute of a principle of sanctification; they are spiritually dead, Eph. ii. 1.

‘ though they breathe, yet they do not live.’ The greatest part of the world remain unsanctified, 1 John v. 19. The world lies in wickedness, that is the major part of the world. Many call themselves Christians, yet blot out the word saints: you may as well call him a man who wants reason, as him a Christian who wants grace; nay, which is worse, some are buoyed up to such a height of wickedness, that they hate and deride sanctification: They hate it; it is bad to want it, it is worse to hate it: they embrace the form of religion, but hate the power. 1. The vulture hates sweet smells, so do they the perfumes of holiness. 2. Deride it; these are your holy ones. To deride sanctification, argues an high degree of atheism, and is a black brand of reprobation: scoffing Ishmael was cast out of Abraham’s family, Gen. xxi. 9. such as scoff at holiness shall be cast out of heaven.

*Use 2. Of Exhortation.* Above all things pursue after sanctification; seek grace more than gold, Prov. iv. 13. ‘ Keep her, for she is thy life.’

*Q. What are the chief inducements to sanctification?*

*A. 1<sup>st</sup>,* It is the will of God that we should be holy: in the text, ‘ This is the will of God, your sanctification.’ As God’s word must be the rule, so his will, the reason of our actions: ‘ this is the will of God, our sanctification.’ Perhaps it is not the will of God we should be rich, but it is his will that we should be holy. God’s will is our warrant.

*2<sup>dly</sup>,* Jesus Christ hath died for our sanctification. Christ shed his blood to wash off our impurity. The cross was both an altar and a laver, Tit. ii. 14. ‘ Who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity.’ If we could be saved without holiness, Christ needed not have died. Christ died, not only to save us from wrath, but from sin.

*3<sup>dly</sup>,* Sanctification makes us resemble God. It was Adam’s sin that he aspired to be like God in omniscience, but we must endeavour to be like him in sanctity. It is only a clear glass in which we can see a face; it is only an holy heart in which something of God can be seen; there’s nothing of God to be seen in an unsanctified man: you may see Satan’s picture in him: envy is the devil’s eye, hypocrisy his cloven foot; but nothing of God’s image can be seen in him. You can see no more of God in him, than you can see a man’s face in a glass that is dusty and foul.

*4<sup>thly</sup>,* Sanctification is that which God bears a great love to. Not any outward ornaments, high blood, or worldly grandeur, draws God’s love, but an heart embellished with holiness. Christ never admired any thing, but the beauty of holiness; he slighted the glorious buildings of the temple, but admired the woman’s faith, ‘ O woman great is thy faith;’ *amor funda-*

*tur similitudine.* A king delights to see his image upon a piece of coin : where God sees his likeness, there he gives his love. The Lord hath two heavens he dwells in, and the holy heart is one of them,

*5thly*, Sanctification is the only thing doth difference us from the wicked : God's people have his seal upon them, 2 Tim. ii. 19. 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his ; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' The godly are sealed with a double seal : 1. A seal of election, 'The Lord knoweth who are his : ' 2. A seal of sanctification, 'Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' This is the name by which God's people are known, Isa. lxiii. 18. 'The people of thy holiness.' As chastity distinguisheth a virtuous woman from a harlot, so sanctification distinguisheth God's people from others, 1 John ii. 27. Ye have received an unction from the holy One.

*6thly*, It is as great a shame to have the name of a Christian, yet want sanctity, as to have the name of a steward, and yet want fidelity ; the name of a virgin, yet want chastity. It exposeth religion to reproach, to be baptized into the name of Christ, yet unholy ; to have eyes full of tears on a sabbath, and on a week day eyes full of adultery, 2 Pet. ii. 14. To be so devout at the Lord's table, as if men were stepping into heaven ; and so profane the week after, as if they came out of hell. To have the name of Christians, yet unholy, is a scandal to religion, and makes the ways of God evil spoken of.

*7thly*, Sanctification fits for heaven, 2 Pet. i. 3. 'Who hath called us to glory and virtue ;' glory is the throne, and sanctification is the step by which we ascend to it. First, you cleanse the vessel, and then you pour in the wine ; first, God cleanseth us by sanctification, and then pours in the wine of glory. Solomon was first anointed with oil, and then he was a king, 1 Kings i. 39. First, God anoints us with the holy oil of his Spirit, and then he sets the crown of happiness upon our head. Pureness of heart and seeing God are linked together, Mat. v. 8.

*Q. How may sanctification be attained to ?*

*A.* 1. Be conversant in the word of God, John xvii. 17. 'Sanctify them through thy truth.' The word is both a glass to shew us the spots of our soul, and a laver to wash them away ; the word hath a transforming virtue in it, it irradiates the mind, and consecrates the heart.

2. Get faith in Christ's blood, Acts xv. 9. 'Having purified their hearts by faith.' She in the gospel that touched the hem of Christ's garment was healed ; a touch of faith purifies. Nothing can have a greater force upon the heart, to sanctify it, than faith ; if I believe Christ and his merits are mine, how can



I sin against him? Justifying faith doth that in a spiritual sense, which miraculous faith doth, it removes mountains, the mountains of pride, lust, envy. Faith, and the love of sin are inconsistent.

3. Breath after the Spirit; it is called 'the sanctification of the Spirit,' 2 Thess. ii. 13. The Spirit sanctifies the heart, as lightning purifies the air, as fire refines metals. *Omne agens generat sibi simile*: The Spirit stamps the impression of its own sanctity upon the heart, as the seal prints its effigies and likeness upon the wax. The Spirit of God in a man perfumes him with holiness, and makes his heart a map of heaven.

4. Associate with sanctified persons. They may, by their counsel, prayers, holy example, be a means to make you holy: as the communion of saints is in our creed, so it should be in our company, Prov. xiii. 20. 'He that walketh with the wise, shall be wise.' Association begets assimilation.

5. Pray for sanctification. Job propounds a question, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' Job xv. 14. God can do it. Out of an unholy heart he can produce grace. O! make David's prayer, Psal. li. 10. 'Create in me a clean heart, O God.' Lay thy heart before the Lord, and say, Lord, my un sanctified heart pollutes all it toucheth. I am not fit to live with such an heart, for I cannot honour thee: nor die with such an heart, for I cannot see thee. O create in me a clean heart; Lord, consecrate my heart, and make it thy temple, and thy praises shall be sung there for ever.

*Use 3. Of thankfulness.* Hath God brought a clean thing out of an unclean: hath he sanctified you? wear this jewel of sanctification with thankfulness, Col. i. 12. 'Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet for the inheritance,' &c. Christian, thou couldest defile thyself, but not sanctify thyself: but God hath done it, he hath not only chained up sin, but changed thy nature, and made thee as a king's daughter all glorious within. He hath put upon thee the breast-plate of holiness, which, though it may be shot at, can never be shot thorough. Are there any here that are sanctified? God hath done more for you than millions: they may be illuminated, but not sanctified. He hath done more for you, than if he had made you the sons of princes, and caused you to ride upon the high places of the earth. Are you sanctified? heaven is begun in you; happiness is nothing but the quintessence of holiness. O how thankful should you be to God! Do as that blind man in the gospel, after he had received his sight, 'He followed Christ, glorifying God,' Luke xviii. 43. Make heaven ring of God's praises.

## OF ASSURANCE.

Q. XXXVI. *WHAT are the benefits which flow from sanctification?*

A. Assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

The first benefit flowing from sanctification, is assurance of God's love.

2 Pet. i. 10. 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.' Sanctification is the seed, assurance is the flower which grows out of it: assurance is a consequent of sanctification, the saints of old had it, 1 John ii. 3. 'We know that we know him,' 2 Tim. i. 12. 'I know whom I have believed.' Here was *sensus fidei*, the reflex act of faith: and, Gal. ii. 20. 'Christ hath loved me.' Here was faith flourishing into assurance. Acolamhadas, when he was sick, pointed to his heart, *Hic sat lucis*, Here I have light enough, meaning comfort and assurance.

Q. 1. *Have all sanctified persons assurance?*

A. They have a right to it, and I do incline to believe that all have it in some degree before their last expiring; though their comfort may be so strong, and their vital spirits so weak, that they cannot express what they feel. But I dare not positively affirm that all have assurance in the first moment of their sanctification: a letter may be written, which is not sealed; so grace may be written in the heart, yet the Spirit may not set the seal of assurance to it. God is a free agent, and may give or suspend assurance *pro licito* as he pleases. Where there is the sanctifying work of the Spirit, he may withhold the sealing work, partly to keep the soul humble; partly to punish our careless walking: we neglect our spiritual watch, grow remiss in duty, and then walk under a cloud; we quench the graces of the Spirit, and God withholds the comforts: and partly to put a difference between earth and heaven. This I the rather speak, to bear up the hearts of God's people, who are dejected because they have no assurance: you may have the water of the Spirit poured on you in sanctification, though not the oil of gladness in assurance; there may be faith of adherence, and not of evidence; there may be life in the root, when there is no fruit in the branches to be seen; so faith in the heart, when no fruit of assurance.

Q. 2. *What is assurance?*

Ans. It is not vocal, any audible voice, or brought to us by

the help of an angel or revelation. Assurance consists of a practical syllogism, where the word of God makes the major, conscience the minor, the Spirit of God the conclusion. 'The word saith, 'He that fears and loves God, is loved of God;' there is the major proposition: then conscience makes the minor, 'But I fear and love God;' then the Spirit makes the conclusion, 'Therefore thou art loved of God.' And this is that which the apostle calls, 'The witnessing of the Spirit with our spirits, that we are his children,' Rom. viii. 16.

Q. 3. *Whether hath a sanctified soul such an assurance as excludes all doubtings?*

Ans. He hath that which bears up his heart from sinking, he hath such an earnest of the Spirit, that he would not part with it for the richest prize; but his assurance, though it be infallible, it is not perfect. There will be sometimes a trepidation or trembling; he is safe, yet not without fears and doubts; as a ship lies safe at anchor, yet may be a little shaken by the wind. If a Christian had no doubtings, there would be no unbelief in him; had he no doubtings, there would be no difference between grace militant and grace triumphant. Had not David his ebblings sometimes as well as flowings? Like the mariner, who sometimes cries out, *stellam video*, I see a star; sometimes the star is out of sight. Sometimes we hear David say, 'Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes,' Psal. xxvi. 3. But at another time he was at a loss, Psal. lxxxix. 49. 'Lord, where are thy former loving-kindnesses?' And there may fall out an eclipse in a Christian's assurance, to put him upon longing after heaven; then there shall not be the least doubting; then the banner of God's love shall be always displayed upon the soul; then the light of God's face shall be without clouds, and have no sun-setting; then the saints shall have an uninterrupted assurance, and be ever with the Lord.

Q. 4. *What are the differences between true assurance and presumption?*

Ans. 1. They differ in the method or manner of working: divine assurance flows from humiliation for sin (I speak not of the measure of humiliation, but the truth.) There are in Palermo, reeds growing, in which there is a sugared juice: a soul humbled for sin is the bruised reed, in which grows this sweet assurance. God's Spirit is a spirit of bondage, before it be a spirit of adoption; but presumption ariseth without any humbling work of the Spirit: 'How camest thou by thy venison so soon?' The plow goes before the seed be sown; the heart must be plowed up by humiliation and repentance, before God sow the seed of assurance.

2. He who hath a real assurance, will take heed of that which will weaken and darken his assurance; he is fearful of the for-



bidden fruit : he knows, though he cannot sin away his soul, yet he may sin away his assurance : but he who hath the *ignis fatuus* of presumption, doth not fear defiling his garments, he is bold in sin, Jer. iii. 4, 5. ' Wilt thou not cry unto me, my Father, Behold, Thou hast done evil things as thou couldst.' Balaam said, My God, yet a forcerer. A sign he hath no money about him, who fears not to travel all hours in the night ; a sign he hath not the jewel of assurance, who fears not the works of darkness.

3. True assurance is built upon a scripture-basis ; the word saith, ' The effect of righteousness shall be quietness and assurance for ever.' Isa. xxxii. 17. A Christian's assurance is built upon this scripture ; God hath sown the seed of righteousness in his soul, and this seed hath brought forth the harvest of assurance : but presumption is a spurious thing, it hath no scripture to shew for its warrant : it is like a will without seal and witnesses, which is null and void in law : presumption wants both the witness of the word, and the seal of the Spirit.

4. Assurance flowing from sanctification always keeps the heart in a lowly posture : Lord, saith the soul, what am I, that, passing by so many, the golden beams of thy love should shine upon me ? St. Paul had assurance : is he proud of this jewel ? No, Eph. iii. 8. ' To me who am less than the least of all saints.' The more love a Christian receives from God, the more he sees himself a debtor to free grace, and the sense of his debt keeps his heart humble ; but presumption is bred of pride. He who presumes, disdains ; he thinks himself better than others, Luke xviii. 11. ' God, I thank thee I am not as other men are, nor as this Publican.' Feathers fly up, but God descends ; he who hath this golden assurance, his heart descends in humility.

Q. 5. *What is it may excite us to look after assurance ?*

Ans. To consider how sweet it is, and the noble and excellent effects it produceth :

1. How sweet it is. This is the manna in the golden pot ; the white stone, the wine of paradise which cheers the heart. How comfortable is God's smile ! the sun is more refreshing when it shines out, than when it is hid in a cloud ; it is a prælibation and a foretaste of glory, it puts a man in heaven before his time : none can know how delicious and ravishing it is, but such as have felt it : as none can know how sweet honey is, but they who have tasted it.

2. The noble and excellent effects it produceth : 1. Assurance will make us love God, and praise him : (1.) Love him. Love is the soul of religion, the fat of the sacrifice : and who can love God so, as he who hath assurance ? The sun reflecting its beams on a burning-glass, makes the glass burn that which is near to it : so assurance (which is the reflexion of God's love

upon the soul) makes it burn in love to God. St. Paul was assured of Christ's love to him, Gal. ii. 20. 'Who hath loved me : ' and how was his heart fired with love ? he valued and admired nothing but Christ, Phil. iii. 8. As Christ was fastened to the cross, so he was fastened to Paul's heart. (2.) Praise him. Praise is the quit-rent we pay to the crown of heaven : who but he who hath assurance of his justification, can bless God, and give him the glory of what he hath done for him ? can a man in a swoon or apoplexy, praise God that he is alive ? can a Christian, staggering with fears about his spiritual condition, praise God that he is elected and justified ? No, 'The living, the living, he shall praise thee,' Isa. xxxviii. 19. Such as are enlivened with assurance, they are the fittest persons to sound forth God's praise.

*Effect 2.* Assurance would drop sweetness into all our creature enjoyments : it would be as sugar to wine, an earnest of more : it gives a blessing with the venison : as guilt imbitters our comforts, it is like drinking out of a worm-wood cup : so assurance would indulcerate and sweeten all health, and the assurance of God's love are sweet riches, and with the assurance of a kingdom are delectable : nay, a dinner of green herbs, with the assurance of God's love, is princely fare.

*Effect 3.* Assurance would make us active and lively in God's service : it would excite prayer, quicken obedience. As diligence begets assurance, so assurance begets diligence. Assurance will not (as Papists say) breed security in the soul, but industry : doubting does discourage us in God's service, but the assurance of his favour breeds joy, 'And the joy of the Lord is our strength,' Neh. viii. 10. Assurance makes us mount up to heaven, as eagles, in holy duties : it is like the Spirit in Ezekiel's wheels, that moved them, and lifted them up. Faith would make us walk, but assurance would make us run : we should never think we could do enough for God. Assurance would be as wings to the bird, as weights to the clock, to set all the wheels of obedience a-running.

*Effect 4.* Assurance would be a golden shield to beat back temptation : assurance triumphs over temptation. There are two sorts of temptations Satan useth : 1. He tempts to draw us to sin : now the being assured of our justification would make this temptation vanish. What, Satan, shall I sin against him who hath loved me, and washed me in his blood ? Shall I return to folly after God hath spoken peace ? Shall I weaken my assurance, wound my conscience, grieve my comforter ? Avoid Satan, tempt no more. 2. Satan would make us question our interest in God ; he tells us we are hypocrites, and God doth not love us. Now there is no such shield against this temptation as assurance ; what, Satan, have I real work of grace in my

heart, and the seal of the Spirit to witness it, and dost thou tell me God doth not love me? Now I know thou art an impostor, who goest about to disprove what I sensibly feel. If faith resists the devil, assurance would put him to flight.

*Effect 5.* Assurance would make us contented, though we have but a little in the world: he who hath enough is content; he who hath sun-light, is content, though he want torch-light. A man that hath assurance, hath enough: *in uno salvatore omnes florent gemmæ ad salutem*: He hath the riches of Christ's merit, a pledge of his love, an earnest of his glory, he is filled with the fulness of God; here is enough and having enough he is content, Ps. xvi. 5. 'The Lord is the portion of my inheritance; the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage.' Assurance will rock the heart quiet; the reason of discontent, is either because men have no interest in God, or do not know their interest. St. Paul saith, 'I know whom I have believed,' 2 Tim. i. 1. There was the assurance of his interest. And, 2 Cor. vi. 10. 'As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,' &c. There was his contentment. Get but assurance, and you will be out of the weekly bill of murmurers, you will be discontented no more. We cannot come amiss to him that hath assurance: God is his; hath he lost a friend? his father lives; hath he lost his only child? God hath given him his only Son; hath he scarcity of bread? God hath given him the finest of the wheat, the bread of life; are his comforts gone? He hath the comforter; doth he meet with storms on the sea? He knows where to put in for harbour; God is his portion, and heaven is his haven. Thus assurance gives sweet contentment in every condition.

*Effect 6.* Assurance would bear up the heart in sufferings, it would make a Christian endure troubles with patience and cheerfulness. With patience, Heb. x. 36. Ye 'have need of patience.' There are some meats (we say) are hard of digestion, and only a good stomach will concoct them: affliction is a meat hard of digestion, but patience (like a good stomach) will be able to digest it; and whence comes patience but from assurance? Rom. v. 5. 'Tribulation worketh patience, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts,' with cheerfulness. Assurance is like the mariner's lantern on the deck, which gives light in a dark night. Assurance gives the light of comfort in affliction, Heb. x. 34. 'Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves,' &c. there was assurance. He that hath assurance, can rejoice in tribulation; he can gather grapes of thorns, and honey out of the lion's carcase. Latimer, "When I sit alone, and can have a settled assurance of the state of my soul, and know that God is mine, I can laugh at all troubles, and nothing can daunt me."

*Effect 7.* Assurance would pacify a troubled conscience: he



who hath a disturbed vexatious conscience, carries an hell about him, *Eheu quis intus scorpio!* but assurance cures the agony, and allays the fury of conscience: conscience, that before was turned into a serpent, now is like a bee that hath honey in its mouth, it speaks peace; *tranquillus deus tranquillat omnia*, Tertul. When God is pacified towards us, then conscience is pacified. If the heavens are quiet, and there are no winds stirring thence, the sea is quiet and calm; so, if there be no anger in God's heart, if the tempest of his wrath do not blow, conscience is quiet and serene.

*Effect 8.* Assurance would strengthen us against the fears of death; such as want it, cannot die with comfort; they are in *æquilibrio*, they hang in a doubtful suspense, what should become of them after death: but he who hath assurance, hath an happy and joyful passage out of the world; he knows he is passed from death to life, he is carried full sail to heaven: Though he cannot resist death, yet he overcomes it.

Q. 6. *What shall they do that want assurance?*

*Ans.* 1. Such as want assurance, let them labour to find grace. When the sun denies light to the earth, it may give forth its influence: when God denies the light of his countenance, he may give the influence of his grace.

Q. *How shall we know we have a real work of grace, and so have a right to assurance?*

*Ans.* If we can resolve two queries, 1. Have we high apprehensions of Jesus Christ? 1 Pet. ii. 7. 'To you that believe he is precious.' Christ is all made up of beauties and delights; our praises fall short of his worth, and is like spreading canvass upon cloth of gold. How precious is his blood and incense? The one pacifies our conscience, the other perfumes our prayers. Can we say we have endearing thoughts of Christ? Do we esteem him our pearl of price, our bright morning-star? Do we count all our earthly enjoyments but as dung in comparison of Christ? Phil. iii. 8. Do we prefer the worst things of Christ, before the best things of the world; the reproaches of Christ before the world's embraces? Heb. xi. 26. *Quer.* 2. Have we the indwelling of the Spirit? 2 Tim. i. 14. 'The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.'

Q. *How may we know that we have the indwelling presence of the Spirit?*

*Ans.* Not by having sometimes good motions stirred up in us by the Spirit; it may work in us yet not dwell: but by the sanctifying power of the Spirit in our heart: the Spirit infuseth *divinam indolem*, a divine nature; it stamps its own impress and effigies on the soul, making the complexion of it holy. The Spirit ennobles and raiseth the heart above the world. When Nebuchadnezzar had his understanding given him, he grazed no

longer among the beasts, but returned to his throne, and minded the affairs of his kingdom: when the Spirit of God dwells in a man, it carries his heart above the visible orbs; it makes him *superna anhulare*, thirst after Christ and glory. If we can find this, then we have grace, and so have a right to assurance.

2. If you want assurance, wait for it. If the figures are graven on the dial, it is but waiting a while, and the sun shines; when grace is engraven in the heart, it is but waiting a while, and we shall have the sunshine of assurance. 'He that believes makes not haste,' Isa. xxviii. 16. He will stay God's leisure. Say not, God hath forsaken you, he will never lift up the light of his countenance; but rather say, as the church, Isa. viii. 17. 'I will wait upon the Lord, which hideth his face from the house of Jacob.' 1. Hath God waited for your conversion, and will not you wait for his consolation? How long did he come a-wooing to you by his Spirit? He waited till his head was filled with dew; he cried, as Jer. xiii. 27. 'Wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be?' O! Christian, did God wait for thy love, and canst not thou wait for his? 2. Assurance is so sweet and precious, that it is worth waiting for; the price of it is above rubies, it cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir. Assurance of God's love is a pledge of election, it is the angels' banquet: what other joy have they! as Micah said, Judg. xviii. 24. 'What have I more;' so, when God assures the soul of his eternal purposes of love, what hath he more to give? Whom God kisseth, he crowns. Assurance is the first fruits of paradise: one smile of God's face, one glance of his eye, one crumb of the hidden manna is so sweet and delicious; that it deserves our waiting. 3. God hath given a promise that we should not wait in vain, Isa. xlix. 23. 'They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.' Perhaps God reserves this cordial of assurance for a fainting time; he keeps sometimes his best wine till last. Assurance shall be reserved as an ingredient to sweeten the bitter cup of death.

Q. 7. *How may deserted souls be comforted, who are cast down for want of assurance? They have the day-star of grace risen in their souls; but as Job complains, 'I went mourning without the sun,' Job xxx. 28. They go mourning for want of the sun-light of God's face: their joy is eclipsed, they walk in darkness, and see no light, Isa. l. 18. How shall we comfort such as lie bleeding in desertion, and are cast down for want of assurance?*

A. 1. Want of assurance shall not hinder the success of the saints' prayers. Sin lived in, doth put a bar to our prayer; but want of assurance doth not hinder prayer; we may go to God still in an humble, fiducial manner. A Christian perhaps may think, because he doth not see God's smiling face, therefore

God will not hear him : this is a mistake, Psal. xxxi. 22. ‘ I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes, nevertheless thou heardst the voice of my supplication.’ If we pour out sighs to heaven, God hears every groan ; though he doth not shew us his face, he may lend us his ear.

2. Faith may be strongest when assurance is weakest ; the woman of Canaan had no assurance, but a glorious faith ; ‘ O woman, great is thy faith,’ Mat. xv. 28. Rachel was more fair, but Leah was more fruitful. Assurance is more fair and lovely to look upon, but a fruitful faith God seeth it better for us, John xx. 28. ‘ Blessed are they that believe, and feel not.’

3. When God is out of sight, yet he is not out of covenant, Psal. lxxxix. 28. ‘ My covenant shall stand fast.’ Though a wife doth not see her husband’s face in many years, yet the marriage-relation holds, and he will come again to her after a long voyage. God may be gone from the soul in desertion, but the covenant stands fast, Isa. liv. 10. ‘ The covenant of my peace shall not be removed.’ *Quer. But this promise was made to the Jews, and doth not belong to us.* Yes, ver. 17. ‘ This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.’ This is made to all the servants of God, those who are now living, as well as those who lived in the time of the Jews.

Q. 8. *What should we do to get assurance ?*

*Ans.* 1. Keep a pure conscience, let no guilt lie upon the conscience unrepented of. God seals no pardons before repentance : God will not pour in the wine of assurance into a foul vessel, Heb. x. 22. ‘ Let us draw near in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.’ Guilt clips the wings of comfort : he who is conscious to himself of secret sins, cannot draw near to God in full assurance ; he cannot call God father, but judge : keep conscience as clear as your eye, that no dust of sin fall into it.

2. If you would have assurance, be much in the actings of grace, 1 Tim. iv. 7. ‘ Exercise thyself unto godliness.’ Men grow rich by trading ; by trading in grace, we grow rich in assurance, 2 Pet. i. 10. ‘ Make your election sure.’ How ? ‘ Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge,’ Keep grace upon the wing, it is the lively faith flourisheth into assurance. No man will set up a great sail into a small boat, but in a large vessel : God sets up the sail of assurance in an heart enlarged with grace.

3. If you would have assurance, cherish the Holy Spirit of God. When David would have assurance, he prays, ‘ take not away thy Spirit from me,’ Psal. li. 11. He knew that it was the Spirit only that could make him hear the voice of joy ; the Spirit is the Comforter, he seals up assurance, 2 Cor. i. 22. Therefore make much of the Spirit ; do not grieve it : as Noah



opened the ark to receive the dove, so should we open our hearts to receive the Spirit; this is the blessed dove which brings an olive-branch of assurance in its mouth.

4. Let us lie at the pool of the ordinances, frequent the word and sacrament, Cant. ii. 2. 'He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love.' The blessed ordinances are the banqueting-house, where God displays the banner of assurance. The sacrament is a sealing ordinance; Christ made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread; so, in the holy supper, in the breaking of bread, God makes himself known to us, to be our God and portion.

Q. 9. *How should they carry themselves who have assurance?*

Ans. 1. If you have assurance of your justification, do not abuse assurance: 1. It is an abusing of assurance, when we grow more remiss in duty; as the musician, having money thrown him, leaves off playing. By remissness, or intermitting the exercises of religion, we grieve the Spirit, and that is the way to have an embargo laid upon our spiritual comforts. 2. We abuse assurance, when we grow presumptuous and less fearful of sin. What, because a father gives his son an assurance of his love, and tells him he will entail his land upon him, shall the son therefore be wanton and dissolute? This were the way to lose his father's affection, and make him cut off the entail: it was an aggravation of Solomon's sin, 'his heart was turned away from the Lord, after he had appeared to him twice,' 1 Kings xi. 9. It is bad to sin, when one wants assurance, but it is worse to sin when one hath it. Hath the Lord sealed his love with a kiss? Hath he left a pledge of heaven in your hands, and do you thus requite the Lord? Will you sin with manna in your mouth? Doth God give you the sweet clusters of assurance to feed on, and will you return him wild grapes? It much pleaseth Satan, either to see us want assurance, or abuse it: this is to abuse assurance, when the pulse of our souls beats faster in sin, and slower in duty.

2. If you have assurance, admire this stupendous mercy. You deserved that God should give you gall and vinegar to drink, and hath he made the honey-comb of his love to drop upon you? O fall down and adore his goodness; say, Lord, how is it that thou shouldest manifest thyself to me, and not to other believers! those whom thou lovest as the apple of thine eye, yet thou holdest them in suspense, and givest them no assurance of thy love; though thou hast given them the new name, yet not the white stone; though they have the seed of grace, yet not the oil of gladness; though they have the Holy Ghost, the sanctifier, yet not the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Lord, whence is it that thou shouldest manifest thyself to me, and

make thy golden beams of assurance shine upon my soul? O admire God! this will be the work of heaven.

3. Let your hearts be endeared in love to God. If God gives his people correction, they must love him; much more when he gives them assurance, Ps. xxxi. 23. 'O love the Lord, ye his saints.' Hath God brought you to the borders of Canaan, given you a bunch of grapes, crowned you with loving-kindness, confirmed your pardon under the broad seal of heaven? How can you be frozen at such a fire? How can you chuse but to be turned into seraphims burning in divine love? Say, as St. Austin, *animam meam in odio haberem*, I would hate my own soul, if I did not find it loving God. Give God the cream and quintessence of your love, and shew your love by being willing to lose all for his sake.

4. If you have assurance, *improve it for God's glory*, several ways: 1. By encouraging such as are yet unconverted; tell them how sweet this hidden manna is; tell them what a good master you serve, what vials you have had; tell them, God hath carried you to the hill of myrrh, to the mountains of spices: he hath given you not only a prospect of heaven, but an earnest. O persuade sinners, by all the love and mercy of God, that they would enroll their names in his family, and cast themselves upon him for salvation; tell them, God hath met with you, and unlocked the secrets of free grace, and assured you of a land flowing with those infinite delights which the eye hath not seen. Thus, by telling others what God hath done for your soul, you may make them in love with the ways of God, and cause them to turn proselytes to religion. 2. *Improve assurance, by comforting such as want it*: Be as the good Samaritan, pour wine and oil into their wounds. You who have assurance, are gotten, as it were, to the haven; you are sure of your happiness: but do you not see others who are struggling with the waves of temptation and desertion, and are ready to sink? O now sympathize with them, and do what you can to comfort them when they are in this deep ocean, 2 Cor. i. 6. 'Whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation.' The comfortable experience of one Christian, being communicated to another doth much revive and bear up his fainting heart: 'Our comfort,' saith the apostle, 'is for your consolation.' 3. *Improve assurance, by walking more heavenly*. You should scorn these things below; you who have an earnest of heaven, should not be too earnest for the earth: you have angels' food; and it becomes not you with the serpent to lick the dust. The wicked are all for corn, wine and oil; but you have that which is better: God hath lifted up the light of his countenance; will you hanker after the world, when you have been feeding upon the grapes and pomegranates of the holy land? Do you now lust after the garlic and

onions of Egypt? When you are clothed with the sun, will you set the moon and stars above you? O let them scramble for the world, who have nothing else but hulks to feed on. Have you assurance of heaven, and is not that enough? Will not a kingdom satisfy you? Such as are high in assurance, should be in the altitudes, live above the world. 4. *Improve assurance by a cheerful walking*: It is for condemned persons to go hanging down their heads: but hast thou thy absolution? Doth thy God smile on thee? Cheer up, 2 Sam. xiii. 4. 'Why art thou, being the king's son, lean?' Art thou the king's son? Hath God assured thee of thy adoption? And art thou sad? Assurance should be an antidote against all trouble: what though the world hate thee? Yet thou art assured that thou art one of God's favourites. What though there is but little oil in the cruise, and thou art low in the world? Yet thou art high in assurance: O then rejoice! How musical is the bird? How doth it chirp and sing, that knows not where to pick up the next crumb! and shall they be sad and discontented, who have God's bond to assure them of their daily bread, and his love to assure them of heaven? But certainly those who have assurance, cannot be but of a sanguine complexion.

5. If you have an assurance of salvation, let this make you long after a glorified state: he who hath an earnest in his hand, desires the whole sum to be paid: that soul who hath tasted how sweet the Lord is, should long for a fuller enjoyment of him in heaven. Hath Christ put this ring of assurance on thy hand, and so espoused thee to himself? how shouldst thou long for the marriage-supper of the Lamb? Rev. xix. 9. O Christian, think with thyself, if a glimpse of heaven, a smile of God's face be so sweet, what will it be, to be ever sunning thyself in the light of God's countenance! certainly, you who have an assurance of your title to heaven, cannot but desire possession. Be content to live, but willing to die.

6. If you have assurance, be careful you do not lose it; keep it; for it is your life, viz. *Bene esse*, the comfort of your life. Keep assurance, 1st, By prayer, Ps. xxxvi. 10. 'O continue thy loving-kindness:' Lord, continue assurance; do not take away this privy-seal from me. 2dly, Keep assurance by humility: pride enstrangeth God from the soul; when you are high in assurance, be low in humility. St. Paul had assurance, and he baptizeth himself with this name, 'Chief of sinners,' 1 Tim. i. 15. The jewel of assurance is best kept in the cabinet of an humble heart.



## OF PEACE.

1 PET. i. 2. *Grace unto you, and Peace be multiplied.*

HAVING spoken of the first fruit of sanctification, assurance; I proceed to the second, viz. peace, 'Peace be multiplied.'

*Q. What are the several species or kinds of Peace?*

*Ans.* Peace, in scripture, is compared to a river, Isa. lxvi. 12. this river parts itself into two silver streams.

1<sup>st</sup>, There is an external peace, and that is either, 1. *Economical*, peace in a family. 2. *Political*, peace in the state. Peace is the nurse of plenty, Psal. cxlvii. 14. 'He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.' How pleasant is it when the waters of blood begin to assuage, and we can see the windows of our ark open, and the dove returning with an olive branch of peace? 3. *Ecclesiastical*, peace in the church. It is Unity in Trinity is the greatest mystery in heaven, and Unity in Verity the greatest mercy on earth. Peace ecclesiastical stands in opposition to schism and persecution.

2<sup>dly</sup>, *A spiritual peace*, which is twofold; peace above us, or peace with God; and peace within us, or peace with conscience: this is superlative; other peace may be lasting, but this is everlasting.

*Q. 2. Whence comes this peace?*

*Ans.* This peace hath the whole Trinity for its author, (1.) God the Father is 'the God of peace,' 1 Thess. v. 23. (2.) God the Son is the 'Prince of peace,' Isa. ix. 9. (3.) Peace is said to be the 'fruit of the Spirit,' Gal. v. 22.

1. God the Father is the God of peace. As he is the God of order, 1 Cor. xiv. 33. so the God of peace, Phil. iv. 9. This was the form of the priest's blessing the people, Numb. vi. 27. 'The Lord give thee peace.'

2. God the Son is the purchaser of peace. He had made peace by his blood, Col. i. 20. 'Having made peace by the blood of his cross.' The atonement Aaron made for the people, when he entered into the holy of holies with blood, was a type of Christ our high-priest, who hath by his sacrifice pacified his angry Father, and made atonement for us. Christ purchased our peace upon hard terms; his soul was in an agony, while he was travelling to bring forth peace to the world.

3. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit. He seals up peace to the conscience: The Spirit clears up the work of grace in the heart,

from whence ariseth peace. There was a well of water, near Hagar, but she did not see it, therefore wept. A Christian hath grace, but doth not see it, therefore weeps. Now the Spirit discovers this well of water, it enables conscience to witness to a man that hath the real work of grace, and so peace flows into the soul. Thus you see whence this peace comes, the Father decrees it, the Son purchaseth it, the Holy Ghost applies it.

Q. 3. *Whether such as are destitute of grace may have peace?*

A. No. Peace flows from sanctification; but they, being unregenerate, have nothing to do with peace, Isa. lvii. 21. 'There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.' They may have a truce, but no peace. God may forbear the wicked a while, and stop the roaring of his cannon; but though there be a truce, yet no peace. The wicked may have something which looks like peace, but it is not. They may be fearless and stupid; but there is a great difference between a stupified conscience, and a pacified conscience, Luke xi. 21. 'When a strong man keeps his palace, his goods are in peace.' This is the devil's peace; he rocks men in the cradle of security; he cries, peace, peace, when men are on the precipice of hell. The seeming peace a sinner hath, is not from the knowledge of his happiness but the ignorance of his danger.

Q. 4. *What are the signs of a false peace?*

A. 1. A false peace hath much confidence in it, but this confidence is conceit. The sinner doth not doubt of God's mercy; from which presumptuous confidence ariseth some kind of quiet in the mind. The same word in the Hebrew, *cajal*, signifies both confidence and folly, indeed a sinner's confidence is folly; how confident were the foolish virgins?

2. False peace separates those things which God hath joined together: God joins holiness and peace, but he who hath a false peace separates these two. He lays claim to peace, but banisheth holiness, Deut. xxix. 19. 'I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.' The wicked are loose and vain, and yet thank God that they have peace: a delusion. You may as well suck health out of poison, as peace out of sin.

3. False peace is not willing to be tried; a sign they are bad wares which will not endure the light; a sign a man hath stolen goods, when he will not have his house searched. A false peace cannot endure to be tried by the word: the word speaks of an humbling and refining work upon the soul before peace; false peace cannot endure to hear of this: the least trouble will shake this peace; it will end in despair. In a false peace, conscience is asleep; but, when this lion of conscience shall be awakened

at death, then it will roar upon a man, he will be a terror to himself, and be ready to lay violent hands upon himself.

Q. 5. *How shall we know that ours is a true peace?*

Ans. 1. True peace flows from union with Christ; *Communio fundatur in unione*. The graft or scion must first be inoculated into the tree before it can receive sap and nourishment from it; so we must first be ingrafted into Christ, before we can receive peace from him. Have we faith? By holiness we are made like Christ; by believing we are made one with Christ, and being in Christ we have peace, John xvi. 33.

2. True peace flows from subjection to Christ; where Christ gives peace, there he sets up his government in the heart, Isa. ix. 7. 'Of his government and peace there shall be no end.' Christ is called 'a priest upon his throne,' Zech. vi. 13. Christ as a priest makes peace; but he will be a priest upon his throne, he brings the heart in subjection to him. If Christ be our peace, he is our prince, Isa. ix. 6. Whenever Christ pacifies the conscience, he subdues the lust.

3. True peace is after trouble. First, God lets loose a spirit of bondage, he convinceth and humbleth the soul; then he speaks peace. Many say they have peace, but is this peace before a storm, or after it? True peace is after trouble. First, there was the earthquake, and then the fire, and then the still small voice, 1 Kings xix. 11. Thou who never hadst any legal bruising, mayst suspect thy peace; God pours the golden oil of peace into broken hearts.

Q. 6. *Whether have all sanctified persons this peace?*

Ans. They have a title to it; they have the ground of it; grace is the seed of peace, and it will in time turn to peace; as the blossoms of a tree to fruit, milk to cream. They have a promise of it, Psal. xxix. 11. 'The Lord will bless his people with peace:' they may have peace with God, though not peace in their own conscience; they have the initials and beginnings of peace. There is a secret peace the heart hath in serving God; such meltings and enlargements in duty as do revive the soul, and bear it up from sinking.

Q. 7. *But why have not all believers the full enjoyment and possession of peace? why is not this flower of peace fully ripe and blown?*

Ans. Some of the godly may not have so full a degree of peace. 1. Through the fury of temptation; the devil, if he cannot destroy us, he will disturb us; Satan disputes against our adoption; he would make us question the work of grace in our hearts, and so troubles the waters of our peace: Satan is like a subtle cheater, who, if he cannot make a man's title to his land void, yet he will put him to many troublesome suits in law. If Satan cannot make us ungodly, he will make us unquiet:



violent winds make the sea rough and stormy; the winds of temptation blowing, disturb peace of spirit, and put the soul into a commotion. 2. The godly may not enjoy peace, through mistake and misapprehension about sin. They find so much corruption, that sure, if there were grace, there would not be such strong workings of corruption: whereas this should be so far from discouraging Christians, and hindering their peace, that it is an argument for them. Let me ask, Whence is it that you feel sin? No man can feel sin, but by grace. A wicked man is insensible: lay an hundred weight upon a dead man, he doth not complain: but the being sensible of corruption, argues a gracious principle, Rom. vii. 21. Again, 'Whence is it that there is a combat with sin, but from the life of grace?' Gal. v. 17. Dead things cannot combat. Whence is it that the saints weep for sin? what are these tears but seeds of faith? The not understanding of this, hinders a Christian's peace. 3. The godly may not enjoy peace, through remissness in duty: they leave their first love. When Christians abate their fervency, God abates their peace: If you slacken the strings of a viol, the music is spoiled; if a Christian slack in duty, they spoil the sweet music of peace in their souls. As the fire decays, so the cold increaseth; as fervency in duty abates, so our peace cools.

*Uſe.* Labour for this blessed peace, peace with God and conscience. Peace with neighbour-nations is sweet, *Pax una triumphis innumeris melior*. The Hebrew word *shalom*, peace, comprehends all blessings, it is the glory of a kingdom; a prince's crown is more beautiful when it is hung with the white lily of peace, than when it is set with the red roses of a bloody war. O then, how sweet is peace of conscience! It is a bulwark against the enemy, Phil. iv. 7. it shall keep you as in a garrison; you may throw out the gauntlet and bid defiance to the enemies: it is the golden pot and the manna; it is the first fruits of paradise. It is still music; for want of this a Christian is in continual fear, he doth not take that comfort in ordinances. Hannah went up to the feast at Jerusalem, but she wept, and did not eat, 1 Sam. i. 7. So, a poor dejected soul goes to an ordinance, but doth not eat of the feast; he weeps and doth not eat. He cannot take that comfort in worldly blessings, health, estate, relations; he wants that inward peace, which should be a sauce to sweeten his comforts. O therefore labour for this blessed peace. Consider the noble and excellent effects of it. 1. It gives boldness at the throne of grace: guilt of conscience clips the wings of prayer, it makes the face blush, and the heart faint: but when a Christian hath some lively apprehensions of God's love, and the Spirit whispering peace, then he goes to God with boldness, as a child to his father, Psal. xxv. 1. 'Unto thee, O Lord, I lift my soul.' Time was when

David's soul was bowed down, Psal. xxxviii. 6. 'I am bowed down greatly;' but now the case is altered, he will lift up his soul to God in a way of triumph, whence was this? God hath spoken peace to his soul, Psal. xxvi. 3. 'Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes.' 2. This divine peace fires the heart with love to Christ. Peace is the result of pardon; he who hath a pardon sealed, cannot chuse but love his prince. How endeared is Christ to the soul! Now Christ is precious indeed. 'O, faith the soul, how sweet is this rose of Sharon! Hath Christ waded through a sea of blood and wrath to purchase my peace; Hath he not only made peace, but spoke peace to me? How should my heart ascend in a fiery chariot of love! How willing should I be to do and suffer for Christ?' This peace quiets the heart in trouble, Mic. v. 5. 'This man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and tread in our palaces.' The enemy may invade our palaces, but not our peace; this man Christ, shall be the peace. When the head aches, the heart may be well; when worldly troubles assault a Christian, his mind may be in peace and quiet, Psal. iv. 8. 'I will lay me down in peace, and sleep.' 'Twas now a sad time with David, he was fleeing for his life from Absalom: it was no small affliction to think that his own son should seek to take away his Father's life and crown: David wept and covered his face, 2 Sam. xv. 30. Yet at this time, faith he, 'I will lay me down in peace, and sleep.' He had trouble from his son but peace from his conscience; David could sleep upon the soft pillow of a good conscience: this is a peace worth getting.

Qu. 8. *What shall we do to attain this blessed peace?*

Ans. 1. Let us ask it of God; he is the God of peace, he beats back the roaring lion, he stills the raging of conscience; if we could call all the angels out of heaven, they could not speak peace without God. The stars cannot make day without the sun; none can make day in a dark deserted soul, but the Sun of righteousness. As the wilderness cannot water itself, but remains dry and parched, till the clouds drop their moisture; so our hearts cannot have peace, till he infuse it and drop it upon us by his Spirit. Therefore pray, 'Lord, thou who art the God of peace, create peace, thou who art the Prince of peace, command it. Give me that peace which may sweeten trouble, yea, the bitter cup of death.'

2. If you would have peace, make war with sin; sin is the Achan that troubles us, the Trojan horse, 1 Kings ix. 22. 'When Joram saw Jehu, he said, is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many?' What peace as long as sin remains unmortified? if you would have peace with

God, break the league with sin; give battle to sin, it is a most just war, God hath proclaimed it: nay, he hath promised us victory, 'Sin shall not have dominion,' Rom. vi. No way to peace but by maintaining a war with sin. *Pax nostra bellum contre dæmonem*, Tertul. When Samson had slain the lion, there came honey out of the lion: by slaying sin, we get this honey of peace.

3. Go to Christ's blood for peace. Some go to fetch their peace from their own righteousness, not Christ's, they go for peace to their holy life, not Christ's death; if conscience be troubled, they strive to quiet it with their duties. This is not the right way to peace: duties must not be neglected, nor yet idolized. Look up to the blood of sprinkling, Heb. xii. 24. That blood of Christ which pacified God, must pacify conscience; Christ's blood being sucked in by faith, gives peace, Rom. v. 1. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' No balm to cure a wounded conscience, but the blood of Christ.

4. Walk closely with God. Peace flows from purity, Gal. vi. 16. 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them.' In the text, grace and peace are put together; grace is the root, and peace is the flower. As balm-water drops from the limbec, so divine peace comes out of the limbec of a gracious heart. Walk very holily; God's Spirit is first a refiner before a comforter.

*Branch 2.* You who have this peace, peace above, peace within, labour to keep it: it is a precious jewel, do not lose it: it is sad to have the league of national peace broken, but it is worse to have the peace of conscience broken: O preserve this peace. *First*, Take heed of relapses; hath God spoken peace? do not turn again to folly, Psal. lxxxv. 8. Besides the ingratitude, there's folly in relapses. It was long ere God was reconciled and the breach made up; and you will again eclipse and forfeit your peace? hath God healed the wound of conscience, and will you tear it open again? will you break another vein? will you cut a new artery? this is returning indeed to folly. What madness is it to meddle again with that sin, which will breed the worm of conscience! *Secondly*, Make up your spiritual accounts daily; see how matters stand between God and your souls, Psal. lxxvii. 6. 'I commune with my own heart.' Often reckonings keep God and conscience friends; do with your hearts as you do with your watches, wind them up every morning by prayer, and at night examine whether your hearts have gone true all that day, whether the wheels of your affections have moved swiftly toward heaven: Oh call yourselves often to account; keep your reckonings even, and that is the way to keep your peace.



## OF JOY.

GAL. V. 22. *The Fruit of the Spirit is Joy.*

THE third fruit of justification, adoption, and sanctification, is joy in the Holy Ghost. Joy is the setting the soul upon the top of a pinnacle, 'tis the cream of the sincere milk of the word.

*Q. What is this Joy?*

*Ans.* Spiritual joy is a sweet and delightful passion, arising from the apprehension and feeling of some good, whereby the soul is supported under present troubles, and fenced against future fear.

1. *It is a delightful passion.* So it is contrary to sorrow, which is a perturbation of mind, whereby the heart is perplexed and cast down. Joy is a sweet and pleasant affection which eases the mind, exhilarates and comforts the spirits.

2. *It ariseth from the feeling of some good.* Joy is not a fancy, or bred of conceit; but is rational, and ariseth from the feeling of some good, viz. the sense of God's love and favour. Joy is so real a thing, that it makes a sudden change in a person; it turns mourning into melody. As in the spring-time, when the sun comes to our horizon, it makes a sudden alteration in the face of the universe, the birds sing, the flowers appear, the fig-tree puts forth her green figs; every thing seems to rejoice and put off its mourning, as being revived with the sweet influence of the sun; so when the Sun of Righteousness ariseth on the soul, it makes a sudden alteration, and the soul is infinitely rejoiced with the golden beams of God's love.

3. *By it the soul is supported under present troubles.* Joy stupifies and swallows up troubles; it carries the heart above them, as the oil swims above the water.

4. *The heart is fenced against future fear.* Joy is both a cordial and an antidote; it is a cordial which gives present relief to the spirits when they are sad; and an antidote, it fenceth off fear of approaching danger, Psal. xxiii. 4. 'I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me.'

*Q. How is this joy wrought?*

*Ans.* 1. It ariseth partly from the promise: as the bee lies at the breast of the flower, and sucks out the sweetness of it; so faith lies at the breast of a promise, and sucks out the quintessence of joy, Psalm xciv. 19. 'Thy comforts delight my soul;' that is the comforts which distil from the limbec of the promises.

2. The Spirit of God (who is called the 'Comforter,' John xiv. 26.) doth sometimes drop in this golden oil of joy into the soul; the Spirit whispers to a believer the remission of his sin, and sheds God's love abroad into the heart, Rom. v. 5. whence flows infinite joy and delight.

Q. 3. *What are the seasons when God doth usually give his people these divine joys?*

A. Five seasons: 1st season, Sometimes at the blessed supper; the soul oft comes weeping after Christ in the sacrament, and God sends it away weeping for joy. The Jews had a custom at their feasts, they poured ointment on their guests, and kissed them; in the Eucharist, God often pours the oil of gladness on the saints, and kisseth them with the kisses of his lips. There are two grand ends of the sacrament, the strengthening of faith, and the flourishing of joy. Here, in this ordinance, God displays the banner of his love; here believers taste not only sacramental bread, but hidden manna. [Caution, not that God always meets the soul with joy.] He may give increase of grace, when not increase of joy; but oftentimes he pours in the oil of gladness, and gives the soul a privy seal of his love; as Christ made himself known in the breaking of bread.

2d Season. Before God calls his people to suffering, Acts xxiii. 11. 'Be of good cheer, Paul.' When God was about to give Paul a cup of blood to drink, he spiced it with joy, 2 Cor. i. 5. 'As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth:' this made the martyrs' flames beds of roses; when Stephen was stoning, he saw heaven open, and the Sun of Righteousness shined in his face. God candies our wormwood with sugar.

3d Season. After sore conflicts with Satan. Satan is the red dragon who troubleth the waters; he puts the soul into frights, makes it believe that it hath no grace, and that God doth not love it; though Satan cannot blot out a Christian's evidence, yet he may cast such a mist before his eyes, that he cannot read it. Now, when the soul hath been bruised with temptations, God will comfort this bruised reed: he now gives joy, *ad corroborandum titulum*, to confirm a Christian's title to heaven. After Satan's fiery darts, comes the white stone, no better balm to heal a tempted soul, than the oil of gladness: as after Christ was tempted, then came an angel to comfort him.

4th Season. After desertion: desertion is a poisoned arrow which shoots to the heart, Job vi. 4. God is called a fire and a light: the deserted soul feels the fire, but doth not see the light; it cries out, as Asaph, Psal. lxxvii. 8. 'Is his mercy clean gone?' Now, when the soul is in this case, and ready to faint away in despair, God shines upon the soul, and gives it some apprehension of his favour, and turns the shadow of death into

the light of the morning. God keeps his cordials for a time of fainting. Joy after desertion is like a resurrection from the dead.

5th Season. At the hour of death, such as have had no joy in their life-time, God puts in this sugar in the bottom of the cup, to make their death sweet. Now, at the last hour, when all other comforts are gone, God sends the comforter; and when their appetite to meat fails, God feeds them with hidden manna. Sure, as the wicked, before they die, have some apprehensions of hell and wrath in their conscience; so the godly have some fore-tastes of God's everlasting favour, though sometimes their diseases may be such, and their animal spirits so oppressed, that they cannot express what they feel. Jacob laid himself to sleep on a stone, where he saw a vision, a ladder, and the angels ascending and descending; so, when the saints lay themselves down to sleep the sleep of death, they have often a vision: they see the light of God's face, and have the evidences of his love sealed up to them for ever.

Q. 4. *What are the differences between worldly joys and spiritual?*

Ans. The gleanings of the one are better than the vintage of the other.

(1.) Spiritual joys help to make us better, worldly joys do often make us worse, Jer. xxii. 21. 'I spake to thee in thy prosperity, and thou saidst, I will not hear.' Pride and luxury are the two worms bred of worldly pleasures, Hos. iv. 11. 'Wine takes away the heart;' it is *fomentum libidinis*, Aug. the inflamer of lust. As Satan entered in the sop, so often in the cup; but spiritual joy makes one better; it is like cordial water, which (as physicians say) doth not only cheer the heart, but purges out the noxious humours: so divine joy is cordial water, which doth not only comfort, but cleanse; it makes a Christian more holy; it causeth an antipathy against sin: it infuseth strength to do and suffer, Neh. viii. 10. 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.' As some colours do not only delight the eye, but strengthen the sight: so the joys of God do not only refresh the soul, but strengthen it, 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.'

(2.) Spiritual joys are inward, they are heart-joys, John xvi. 22. 'Your heart shall rejoice.' Seneca saith, true joy *latet in profundo*, it is hidden within, worldly joy is *in superficie*, it lies in the outside, like the dew that wets the leaf, 2 Cor. v. 12. who 'rejoice in appearance,' (in the Greek) in the face. It goes no farther than the face, it is not within; in 'laughter the heart is sad.' Like a house which hath a gilded frontispiece, but all the rooms within are hung in mourning. But spiritual joy lies most within, 'Your heart shall rejoice.' Divine joy is like a



spring of water which runs under ground : a Christian, others can see his sufferings, but they see not his joy, Prov. xiv. 10. 'A stranger intermeddeth not with his joy.' This joy is hidden manna, hid from the eye of the world ; he hath still music, which others hear not : the marrow lies within, the best joy is within the heart.

(3.) Spiritual joys are sweeter than others, better than wine, Cant. i. 2. They are a Christian's festival ; they are the golden pot and the manna, they are so sweet, that they make every thing else sweet ; sweeten health, estate, as sweet water poured on flowers make them more fragrant and aromatical. Divine joys are so delicious and ravishing, that they do very much put our mouth out of taste to earthly delights ; as he who hath been drinking spirits of alkermes, tastes little sweetness in water. St. Paul had tasted these divine joys, and his mouth was out of taste to worldly things : the world was crucified to him, Gal. vi. 14. it was like a dead thing, he could find no sweetness in it.

(4.) Spiritual joys are more pure, they are not tempered with any bitter ingredients ; a sinner's joy is mixed with dregs, it is imbittered with fear and guilt ; the wolf feeds in the breasts of his joy, he drinks wormwood wine : but spiritual joy is not muddled with guilt, but like a crystal-stream, runs pure ; it is all spirits and quintessence ; it is joy, and nothing but joy, it is a rose without prickles, it is honey without the wax.

(5.) These are satisfying and filling joys, John xvi. 24. 'Ask that your joy may be full.' Worldly joys can no more fill the heart, than a drop can fill a cistern ; they may please the palate or fancy, (Plato calls them pictures of joy) not satisfy the soul, Eccl. i. 8. 'The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing ;' but the joys of God satisfy, Ps. xciv. 19. 'Thy comforts delight my soul.' There is as much difference between spiritual joys and earthly, as between a banquet that is eaten, and one that is painted on the wall.

(6.) These are stronger joys than worldly, Heb. vi. 18. 'Strong consolation.' They are strong indeed, that can bear up a Christian's heart in trials and afflictions, 1 Thess. i. 6. 'Having received the word in much affliction, with joy.' These are roses that grow in winter, these joys can sweeten the waters of Marah ; he that hath these can gather grapes of thorns, and fetch honey out of the carcase of a lion, 2 Cor. vi. 10. 'As sorrowing yet always rejoicing.' At the end of the rod a Christian tastes honey.

(7.) These are unwearied joys : other joys, when in excess, oft cause a loathing, we are apt to surfeit on them ; too much honey nauseates : one may be tired with pleasure as well as labour ; Xerxes offered a reward to him that could find out a new pleasure : but the joys of God, though they satisfy, yet

they never surfeit ; a drop of joy is sweet, but the more of this wine the better ; such as drink of the joys of heaven, are never cloyed ; the satiety is without loathing, because they still desire the joy wherewith they are satiated.

(8.) These are more abiding joys. Worldly joys are soon gone ; such as crown themselves with rose-buds, and bathe in the perfumed waters of pleasure, yet these joys which seem to be sweet are swift ; like meteors they give a bright and sudden flash, and then disappear : but the joys which believers have, are abiding ; they are a blossom of eternity, a pledge and earnest of those rivers of pleasure which run at God's right hand for evermore.

*Q. 5. Why is this joy to be laboured for ?*

*Ans.* Because this joy is self-existent, it can subsist in the want of all other carnal joy. This joy depends not upon outward things : as the philosophers once said, when the musicians came to them, " philosophers can be merry without music ;" he that hath this joy can be cheerful in the deficiency of carnal joys ; he can rejoice in God, in sure hope of glory, ' though the fig-tree doth not flourish,' Hab. iii. 17. Spiritual joy can go without silver crutches to support it. Spiritual joy is higher built than upon creatures, it is built on the love of God, on the promises, on the blood of Christ.

2. Because spiritual joy carries the soul through duty cheerfully ; the sabbath is a delight, religion is a recreation. Fear and sorrow hinder us in the discharge of duty ; but a Christian serves God with activity, when he serves him with joy. The oil of joy makes the wheels of obedience move faster. How fervently did they pray, whom God made joyful in the house of prayer ? Isa. lvi. 7.

3. Joy is the beginning of heaven here ; it is called the kingdom of God, Rom. xiv. 17. because it is a taste of that which the saints have in the kingdom of God. What is the heaven of the angels, but the smiles of God's face, the sensible perception and feeling of those joys which are infinitely ravishing and full of glory ? And, to encourage and quicken us in seeking after them, consider, that Christ died to purchase this joy for the saints : he was a man of sorrows, that we may be full of joy, he prays that the saints may have this divine joy, John xvii. 13. ' And now I come to thee, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.' And this prayer he now prays over in heaven ; he knows we never love him so as when we feel his love : which may encourage us to seek after this joy ; we pray for that which Christ himself is praying for, that his joy may be fulfilled in us.

*Q. 6. What shall we do to obtain this spiritual joy ?*

*Ans.* Walk accurately and heavenly ; God gives it after a long and close walking with him. (1.) Observe your hours :

set time every day apart for God. (2.) Mourn for sin: mourning is the seed (as Basil saith) out of which the flower of spiritual joy grows, Isa. lvii. 18. 'I'll restore comfort to my mourners.' (3.) Keep the book of conscience fair written: do not by presumptuous sins blur your evidences: a good conscience is the ark where God puts the hidden manna. (4.) Be often upon your knees, pray with life and fervency. The same Spirit that fills the heart with sighs, fills it with joys. The same Spirit that indites the prayer, seals it. When Hannah had prayed, her countenance was no more sad, 1 Sam. i. 18. Praying Christians have much intercourse with God; and none are so like to have the secrets of his love imparted, as those who hold correspondence with him: by close walking with God, we get these bunches of grapes by the way, which are an earnest of future happiness.

Q. 7. *How shall we comfort them that want joy?*

Ans. such as walk in close communion with God, have more than others.

1. Initial joy, joy *in semine* in the seed, Psal. xcvi. 11. 'Light (a metaphor for joy) is sown for the righteous.' Grace in the heart is a seed of joy; though a Christian wants the sun, he hath a day-star in his heart.

2. A believer hath real, though not royal comforts; he hath, as Aquinas saith, *gaudium in Deo*, tho' not *a Deo*: joy in God, though not from God. Joy in God is the delight and complacency the soul takes in God, Psalm civ. 34. 'My soul shall be glad in the Lord.' He that is truly gracious, is so far joyful, as to take comfort in God: though he cannot say, God rejoiceth in him, yet he can say, he rejoiceth in God.

3. He hath supporting, though not transporting comforts; he hath so much, that keeps him from sinking, Psal. cxxxviii. 3. 'Thou strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.' If a Christian hath not God's arm to embrace him, yet to uphold him: thus a Christian, who walks with God, hath something that bears up his heart from sinking; and it is but waiting a while, and he is sure of those joys which are unspeakable, and full of glory.

Use 1. Then see that religion is no melancholy thing; it brings joy: the fruit of the Spirit is joy; *Mutatur non tollitur*. A poor Christian, that feeds on bread and water, may have purer joy than the greatest monarch; though he fares hard, he feeds high: he hath a table spread from heaven, angels' food, hidden manna: he hath sometimes those sweet raptures of joy, as a cause of jubilation of spirit, 2 Cor. xii. 3. he hath that which is better felt than can be expressed.

Use 2. If God gives his people such joy in this life: O then what glorious joy will he give them in heaven, Mat. xxv. 21.



‘Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord :’ Here joy begins to enter into us, there we shall enter into joy : God keeps his best wine till last. Heliogabalus bathed himself in sweet perfumed waters : What joy when the soul shall forever bathe itself in the pure and pleasant fountain of God’s love ? What joy to see the orient brightness of Christ’s face, and have the kisses of those lips which drop sweet smelling myrrh ? *Laetabitur sponsa in amplexibus Domini*, Aug. Oh ! if a cluster of grapes here be so sweet, what will the full vintage be ? How may this set us all a-longing for that place, where sorrow cannot live, and where joy cannot die.

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## GROWTH IN GRACE.

2 PET. iii. 18. *But grow in grace.*

### FRUIT IV.

*GROWTH of grace.* True grace is progressive, of a spreading, growing nature. It is with grace, as with the light : First, There is the *Crepusculum*, or day-break : then it shines brighter to the full meridian. A good Christian is like the crocodile, *quamdiu vivit crescit* ; he hath never done growing. The saints are not only compared to stars for their light, but to trees for their growth, Isa. lxi. 3. Hof. xiv. 5. A good Christian is not like Hezekiah’s sun that went backward, nor Joshua’s sun that stood still, but it is always advancing in holiness, and increasing with the increase of God, Col. ii. 16. Now, to amplify and illustrate this ?

Q. 1. *How many ways may a Christian be said to grow in grace ?*

Ans. 1. He grows *vigore*, in the exercise of grace ; his lamps are burning and shining : therefore we read of a lively hope, 1 Pet. i. 3. Here is the activity of grace ; the church prays for the blowing of the Spirit, that her spices might flow forth, Cant. iv. 61.

2. A Christian grows *gradu*, in the degree of grace ; he goes from strength to strength, Psal. lxxxiv. 7. viz. from one degree of grace, to another. A saint goes from faith to faith, Rom. i. 17. and his love abounds more and more, Phil. i. 9. Here is growing in the degree.

Q. 2. *What is the right manner of a Christian’s growth ?*

Ans. 1. The right manner of growth, is to grow less in one’s own eyes, Psal. xxii. 6. ‘I am a worm, and no man.’ The sight of corruption and ignorance make a Christian grow into a

dislike of himself, he doth vanish in his own eyes. Job abhorred himself in the dust, *ch. xlii. 6.* This is good to grow out of conceit with one's self.

2. The right manner of growth, is to grow proportionably, when a Christian grows in one grace as well as another, *2 Pet. i. 5.* 'To grow in knowledge, but not in meekness, brotherly love, good works, this is not the right growth; a thing may swell, and not grow; a man may be swelled with knowledge, yet may have no spiritual growth: the right manner of growth is uniform, growing in one grace as well as another. As the beauty of the body is, when there is a symmetry of parts, not only the head grows, but the arms and breast; so spiritual growth is most beautiful, when there is a symmetry and proportion, every grace thrives.

3. The right manner of growth is, when a Christian hath grace suitable to his several employments and occasions; when corruptions are strong, and he hath grace able to give check to them; burdens are heavy, and he hath patience able to bear them; temptations fierce, and he hath faith able to resist them: here is grace growing in the right manner.

Q. 3. *Whence is it that true grace cannot but grow?*

*Ans.* 1. It is proper for grace to grow; it is *semen manens*, the seed of God, *1 John iii. 9.* It is the nature of seed to grow; grace doth not lie in the heart, as a stone in the earth, but as seed in the earth, which will spring up, first the blade and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear.

2. Grace cannot but grow, from the sweetness and excellency of it; he that hath grace, is never weary of it, but still would have more; the delight he hath in it, causeth thirst; grace is the image of God, and a Christian thinks he can never be enough like God. Grace instils peace; therefore a Christian cannot but strive to increase in grace, because, as grace grows, so peace grows.

3. Grace cannot but grow, from a believer's ingrafting into Christ; he who is a scion, ingrafted into this noble, generous stock, cannot but grow. Christ is so full of sap, and vivifical influence, that he makes all inoculated into him, grow fruitful, *Hos. xiv. 8.* 'From me is thy fruit found.'

Q. 4. *What motives or incentives are there to make us grow in grace?*

*Ans.* 1. Growth is the end of the ordinances. Why doth a man lay out cost on ground, manure and water it, but that it may grow? The sincere milk of the word is, that we may grow thereby, *1 Pet. ii. 2.* The table of the Lord is on purpose for our spiritual nourishment and increase of grace.

2. The growth of grace is the best evidence of the truth of it: things that have no life will not grow, a picture will not

grow, a stake in the hedge will not grow ; but a plant that hath a vegetative life grows. The growing of grace shews it to be alive in the soul.

3. Growth in grace is the beauty of a Christian. The more a child grows, the more it comes to its favour and complexion, and looks more ruddy ; so, the more a Christian grows in grace, the more he comes to his spiritual complexion, he looks fairer. Abraham's faith was beautiful when in its infancy, but at last it grew so vigorous and eminent, that God himself was in love with it, and crowned Abraham with his honour, to be the ' father of the faithful.'

4. The more we grow in grace, the more glory we bring to God : God's glory is more worth than the salvation of all men's souls. This should be our design, to raise the trophies of God's glory ; and how can we do it more, than by growing in grace ? John xv. 8. ' Hereby is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.' Though the least drachm of grace will bring salvation to us, yet it will not bring so much glory to God, Phil. i. 11. ' Filled with the fruits of his righteousness, which are to the praise of his glory.' It commends the skill of the husbandman, when his plants grow and thrive ; it is a praise and honour to God, when we thrive in grace.

5. The more we grow in grace, the more will God love us. Is it not that we pray for ? the more growth, the more will God love us. The husbandman loves his thriving plants ; the thriving Christian is God's *Hephzibah*, or chief delight. Christ loves to see the vine flourishing, and the pomegranates budding, Cant. vi. 11. Christ accepts the truth of grace, but commends the growth of grace, Matth. viii. 10. ' I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.' Would you be as the beloved disciple that lay in Christ's bosom ? would you have much love from Christ ? labour for much growth, let faith flourish with good works, and love increase into zeal.

6. What need we have to grow in grace. There is still something lacking in our faith, 1 Thess. iii. 10. Grace is but in its infancy and minority, and we must be still adding a cubit to our spiritual stature ; the apostles said, ' Lord, increase our faith,' Luke xvii. 5. Grace is but weak, 2 Sam. iii. 39. ' I am this day weak, though anointed king.' So, though we are anointed with grace, yet we are but weak, and had need arrive at further degrees of sanctity.

7. The growth of grace will hinder the growth of corruption. The more health grows, the more the distempers of the body abate ; so it is in spirituals ; the more humility grows, the more the swelling of pride is assuaged ; the more purity of heart grows, the more the fire of lust is abated. The growth of flowers in the garden doth not hinder the growing of weeds ; but the



growing of this flower of grace hinders the sprouting of corruption. As some plants have an antipathy, and will not thrive if they grow near together, as the vine and the bay-tree; so, where grace grows, sin will not thrive so fast.

8. We cannot grow too much in grace; there is no *nimium*, no excess there. The body may grow too great, as in the droply; but faith cannot grow too great, 2 Thess. i. 3. 'Your faith groweth exceedingly;' here was exceeding, yet not excess. As a man cannot have too much health, so not too much grace. Grace is the beauty of holiness, Psal. cx. 3. We cannot have too much spiritual beauty; it will be the only trouble at death, that we have grown no more in grace.

9. Such as do not grow in grace, decay in grace: *Non progredi in via est regredi*, Bern. There is no standing at a stay in religion, either we go forward or backward: if faith doth not grow, unbelief will; if heavenly mindedness doth not grow, covetousness will. A man that doth not increase his stock, diminisheth it; if you do not improve your stock of grace, your stock will decay. The angels on Jacob's ladder were either ascending or descending; if you do not ascend in religion, you descend.

10. The more we grow in grace, the more we shall flourish in glory. Though every vessel of glory shall be full, yet some vessels hold more: he whose pound gained ten, was made ruler over ten cities, Luke xix. 17. Such as do not grow much, though they do not lose their glory, yet they lessen their glory. If any shall follow the Lamb in whiter and larger robes of glory than others, they shall be such as have shone most in grace here.

*Use.* Lament we may the want of growth: religion in many is grown only into a form and profession; this is to grow in leaves, not in fruit; many Christians are like a body in an atrophy, which doth not thrive; they are not nourished by the sermons they hear: like the angels who assumed bodies, they did eat, but did not grow. It is very suspicious where there is no growth, there wants a vital principle. Some instead of growing better, grow worse; they grow more earthly, more profane, 2 Tim. iii. 13. Evil men *proficient in pejus*, shall wax worse and worse. Many grow hell-ward, they grow past shame, Eph. ii. 3, 5. they are like some watered stulfs, which grow more rotten.

Q. 5. *How shall we know whether we grow in grace?*

A. For the deciding of this question, I shall, *First*, Shew the signs of our not growing; *Secondly*, Of our growing.

*1st*, The signs of our not growing in grace, but rather falling into a spiritual consumption.

*Sign 1.* When we have lost our spiritual appetite. A con-

sumptive person hath not that stomach to his meat as formerly. Perhaps, Christian, thou canst remember the time when thou didst hunger and thirst after righteousness, thou didst come to the ordinances with such a stomach as to a feast: but now it is otherwise, Christ is not so prized, nor his ordinances so loved: a sad presage, grace is on the declining hand; thou art in a deep consumption. A sign David was near his grave, when he covered him with clothes, and got no heat, 1 Kings i. 1. So, when a person is plied with hot clothes, I mean ordinances, yet he hath no heat of affection to spiritual things; this is a sign he is declining in grace.

*Sign 2.* When we grow more worldly. Perhaps once we were mounted into higher orbs, we did set our hearts on things above, and speak the language of Canaan; but now our minds are taken off heaven, we dig our comfort out of these lower mines, and with Satan compass the earth: a sign we are going down the hill apace, and our grace is in a consumption. It is observable, when nature decays, and people are near dying, they grow more stooping; and truly, when men's hearts grow more stooping to the earth, and they can hardly lift up themselves to an heavenly thought, if grace be not dead, yet it is ready to die, Rev. iii. 2.

*Sign 3.* When we are less troubled about sin. Time was when the least sin did grieve us, (as the least hair makes the eye weep) but now we can digest sin without remorse. Time was when a Christian was troubled if he neglected closet-prayer; now he can omit family-prayer. Time was when vain thoughts did trouble him: now he is not troubled for loose practices. Here is a sad declension in religion; and truly grace is so far from growing, that we can hardly perceive its pulse to beat.

*2dly,* The signs of our growing in grace.

1. The first sign of our growing is, when we are got beyond our former measures of grace: a sign a child thrives, when he hath outgrown his clothes, his clothes are too little for him. That knowledge which would serve us before, will not serve us now; we have a deeper insight into religion, our light is clearer, our spark of love is increased into a flame; there is a sign of growth. That competency of grace we once had, is too scanty for us; we have outgrown ourselves.

2. When we are more firmly rooted in religion, Col. ii. 7. 'Rooted in him, and established:' the spreading of the root shews the growth of the tree. When we are so strongly fastened on Christ, that we cannot be blown down with the breath of heretics, a blessed sign of growth. Athanasius was called *Adamant ecclesiae*, an adamant that could not be removed from the love of the truth.

3. The third sign of growth; When we have a more spiritual

frame of heart. *1st*, We are more spiritual in our principles : we oppose sin out of love to God, and as it strikes at his holiness. *2dly*, We are more spiritual in our affections : we grieve for the first rising of corruption, for the bubbling up of vain thoughts, the spring that runs under ground. We mourn not only for the penalty of sin, but the pollution. It is not only a coal that burns, but blacks. *3dly*, We are spiritual in the performance of duty ; we are more serious, reverent, fervent ; we have more life in prayer, we put fire to the sacrifice, Rom. xii. 'Fervent in spirit.' We serve God with more love, which ripens and mellows our duty, and makes it come off with a better relish.

4. The fourth sign of growth ; When grace gets ground by opposition. The fire, by an antiperistasis, burns hottest in the coldest season. Peter's courage increased by the opposition of the high-priest and the rulers, Acts iv. 8, 11. The martyrs' zeal was increased by persecution. Here was grace of the first magnitude.

*Q. 6. What shall we do to grow in grace ?*

*Ans.* 1. Take heed of that which will hinder growth, the love of any sin : the body may as well thrive in a fever, as grace can where any sin is cherished.

2. Use all means for growth in grace. *1st*, 'Exercise yourselves to godliness,' 1 Tim. iv. 7. The body grows stronger by exercise. Trading of money makes men grow rich ; the more we trade our faith in the promises, the richer in faith we grow. *2dly*, If you would be growing Christians, be humble Christians. It is observed in some countries (as in France) the best and largest grapes which they make their wine of, grow on the lower sort of vines ; the humble saints grow most in grace, 1 Pet. v. 5. 'God giveth grace to the humble.' *3dly*, Pray to God for spiritual growth. Some pray that they may grow in gifts. It is better to grow in grace than gifts : gifts are for ornament, grace is for nourishment ; to edify others, to save ourselves. Some pray that they may grow rich ; but a fruitful heart is better than a full purse. Pray that God would make you grow in grace, though it be by affliction, Heb. xii. 10. The vine grows by pruning. God's pruning-knife is to make us grow more in grace.

*Q. 7. How may we comfort such as complain they do not grow in grace ?*

*Ans.* They may mistake ; they may grow, when they think they do not, Prov. xiii. 7. 'There is that maketh himself poor, yet he is rich.' The sight Christians have of their defects in grace, and their thirst after greater measures of grace, makes them think they do not grow when they do. He who covets a great estate, because he hath not so much as he desires, there-



fore he thinks himself to be poor. Indeed Christians should seek after the grace they want, but they must not therefore overlook the grace they have. Let Christians be thankful for the least growth; if you do not grow so much in assurance, bless God if you grow in sincerity; if you do not grow so much in knowledge, bless God if you grow in humility. If a tree grows in the root, it is a true growth; if you grow in the root-grace of humility, it is as needful for you as any other growth.



## OF PERSEVERANCE.

1 PET. i. 5. *Who are kept by the Power of God, through Faith unto Salvation.*

THE fifth and last fruit of sanctification, is perseverance in grace. The heavenly inheritance is kept for the saints, 1 Pet. i. 4. and they are kept to the inheritance; in my text, 'Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' The apostle asserts a saint's stability and permanency in grace. The saint's perseverance is much opposed by Papists and Arminians; but it is not the less true, because it is opposed. A Christian's main comfort depends upon this doctrine of perseverance: take away this, and you much prejudice religion, and cut the sinews of all cheerful endeavours. Before I come to the full handling and discussing this great point, let me first clear the sense of it, which I shall do by way of concession or grant.

When I say, believers do persevere: 1<sup>st</sup>, I grant, that such as are so only in profession, may fall away, 2 Tim. iv. 10. 'Demas hath forsaken us.' Blazing comets soon evaporate. A building on sand will fall, Matth. vii. 26. 'Seeming grace may be lost.' No wonder to see a bough fall from a tree that is only tied on. Hypocrites are only tied on Christ by an external profession, they are not ingrafted. Who ever thought artificial motions would hold long? the hypocrites' motion is only artificial, not vital. All blossoms do not ripen into fruit.

2<sup>dly</sup>, I grant, that, if believers were left to stand upon their own legs, they might fall finally. Some of the angels, who were stars full of light and glory, yet did actually lose their grace; and if those pure angels fell from grace, much more would the godly, who have so much sin to betray them, if they were not upheld by a superior power.

3<sup>dly</sup>, I grant, true believers, tho' they do not fall away actually, and lose all their grace, yet their grace may fail in the degree, and they may make a great breach upon their sanctification. Grace may be *meritura*, *non mortua*; dying, but not

dead, Rev. iii. 2. 'Strengthen the things which are ready to die.' Grace may be like fire in the embers, though not quenched, yet the flame is gone out. This decay of grace I shall shew in two particulars; (1.) The lively actings of grace may be suspended, Rev. ii. 4. 'Thou hast left thy first love.' Grace may be like a sleepy habit; the godly may act faintly in religion, the pulse of their affections may beat low. The wise virgins slumbered, Matth. xxv. 5. The exercise of grace may be hindered; as when the course of water is stopped, and doth not run. (2.) Instead of grace exercising in the godly, corruption may exercise; instead of patience, murmuring; instead of heavenliness, earthliness. How did pride put forth itself in the disciples, when they strove who should be the greatest! how did lust put forth itself in David? Thus lively and vigorous may corruption be in the regenerate; they may fall into enormous sins. But though all this be granted, yet they do not *penitus excedere*, fall away finally from grace. David did not quite lose his grace; for then, why did he pray, 'Take not away thy Holy Spirit from me!' He had not quite lost the Spirit. As Eutyches, when he fell from a window, Acts xx. and all thought he was dead; 'No, saith Paul, there is life in him:' so David fell foully, but there was the life of grace in him. Though the saints may come to that pass, they have but little faith, yet not to have no faith; though their grace may be drawn low, yet not drawn dry: though grace may be abated, not abolished; though the wise virgins slumbered, yet their lamps were not quite gone out. Grace, when it is at the lowest, shall revive and flourish; as when Samson had lost his strength, his hair grew again, and he renewed his strength. Having thus explained the proposition, I come now to the amplifying this great doctrine of the saints perseverance.

Q. 1. *By what means do Christians come to persevere?*

Ans. 1. By the manuduction and help of ordinances, prayer, word, sacraments. Christians do not arrive at perseverance when they sit still and do nothing. It is not with us as with passengers in a ship, who are carried to the end of their voyage, and they sit still in the ship; or, as it is with noblemen, who have their rents brought in without their toil or labour: but we arrive at salvation in the use of means; as a man comes to the end of a race by running, to a victory by fighting, Matth. xxvi. 41. 'Watch and pray.' As Paul said, Acts xxvii. 31. 'Except ye abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.' Believers shall come to shore at last, arrive at heaven; but, 'except they abide in the ship,' viz. in the use of ordinances, 'they cannot be saved.' The ordinances cherish grace: as they beget grace, so they are the breast-milk by which it is nourished and preserved to eternity.

2. *Auxilio spiritus*, by the sacred influence and concurrence of the Spirit. The Spirit of God is continually at work in the heart of a believer, to carry on grace to perseverance; it drops on fresh oil, to keep the lamp of grace burning. The Spirit excites, strengthens, increaseth grace, and makes a Christian go from one step of faith to another, till he comes to the end of his faith, salvation, 1 Pet. i. 9. It is a fine expression of the apostle, 2 Tim. i. 14. 'The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.' He who dwells in an house, keeps the house in repair; the Spirit dwelling in a believer, keeps grace in repair. Grace is compared to a river of the water of life, John vii. 38. This river can never be dried up, because God's Spirit is a spring which continually feeds it.

3. Grace is carried on to perseverance, by Christ's daily intercession. As the Spirit is at work in the heart, so is Christ at work in heaven. Christ is ever praying that the saints' grace may hold out, John xvii. 11. *Conserva illos*; 'Father, keep those whom thou hast given me;' keep them as the stars in their orbs: keep them as jewels, that they may not be lost. 'Father, keep them.' That prayer Christ made for Peter, was the copy of his prayer he now makes for believers, Luke xxii. 32. 'I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not,' that it be not totally eclipsed? how can the children of such prayers perish?

Q. 2. *By what arguments may we prove the saints perseverance?*

Ans. 2. *A veritate Dei*, from the truth of God. God hath both asserted it, and promised it: (1.) God hath asserted it, 1 John ii. 9. 'His seed remaineth in him.' 1 John ii. 27. 'The anointing ye have received of him abideth in you.' (2.) As God hath asserted it, so he hath promised it: the truth of God, the most orient pearl of his crown, is laid a pawn in the promise, John x. 28. 'I will give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.' Jer. xxxii. 40. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' God will so love his people, that he will not forsake them; and they shall so fear him, that they shall not forsake him. If a believer should not persevere, God should break his promise, Hos. ii. 19. 'I will betrothe thee unto me for ever, in righteousness and loving-kindness.' God doth not marry his people unto himself, and then divorce them: he hates putting away, Mal. ii. 16. God's love ties the marriage knot so fast, that neither death nor hell can break it asunder.

2. The second argument is, *a potentia Dei*, from the power



of God. In the text, we 'are kept by the power of God unto salvation.' Every person in the Trinity hath an hand in making a believer persevere. God the Father establisheth, 1 Cor. i. 21. God the Son confirms, 1 Cor. i. 8. God the Holy Ghost seals, Eph. i. 13. so that it is the power of God that keeps us. Alas, we are not kept by our own power. The Pelagians held, that man, by his own power, might overcome temptation, and persevere. But St. Austin confutes him. "Man, saith he, prays unto God for perseverance, which would be absurd, if he had power of himself to persevere." And, saith St. Austin, "if all the power be inherent in a man's self, then why should not one persevere, as well as another? Why not Judas as well as Peter?" So that it is not by any other than the power of God that we are kept: as the Lord preserved Israel from perishing in the wilderness, till he brought them to Canaan: the same care will he take, if not in a miraculous manner, yet in a spiritual invisible manner, in preserving his people in a state of grace, till he bring them to the celestial Canaan. As the Heathens feigned of Atlas, that he did bear up the heavens from falling; the power of God is that Atlas which bears up the saints from falling. It is disputed, whether grace of itself may not perish, as Adam's; yet sure I am, grace kept by the power of God, cannot perish.

3. The third argument is taken: *ab electione*, from God's electing love. Such as God hath from all eternity elected to glory, cannot fall away finally: but every true believer is elected to glory, therefore he cannot fall away. What can frustrate election, or make God's decree void? This argument stands like mount Sion, which cannot be moved; insomuch that some of the Papists hold, that those who have absolute election cannot fall away, 2 Tim. ii. 19. 'The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knows them that are his.' The foundation of God is nothing else but God's decree in election; and this stands sure, God will not alter it, others cannot.

4. The fourth argument is taken, *ab unione cum Christo*, from believers union with Christ. They are knit to Christ as the members to the head by the nerves and ligament of faith, so that they cannot be broken off, Eph. iii. 23. What was once said of Christ's natural body, is true of his mystical, 'A bone of it shall not be broken.' As it is not possible to sever the leaven and the dough when they are once mingled and kneaded together; so it is impossible, when Christ and believers are once united, ever to be separated: Christ and his members make one Christ. Now, is it possible that any part of Christ should perish? How can Christ lose any member of his body mystical, and be perfect? In short, *Si unus excidat, quare non et alter?* If one believer may be broken off from Christ, then, by the same rule,

why not another? why not all? And so Christ should be an head without a body.

5. The fifth argument is taken, *ab emptione*, from the nature of a purchase. A man will not lay down his money for a purchase which may be lost, and the fee-simple alienated. Christ died, that he might purchase us as a people to himself for ever, Heb. ix. 12. 'Having obtained eternal redemption for us.' Would Christ, think we, have shed his blood, that we might believe in him for a while, and then fall away? Do we think Christ will lose his purchase?

6. The sixth argument is, *a victoria supra mundum*, from a believer's victory over the world. The argument stands thus: He who overcomes the world, doth persevere in grace: but a believer doth overcome the world, therefore he perseveres in grace, 1 John v. 4. 'This is the victory over the world, even our faith.' A man may lose a single battle in the field, yet at last win the victory. A child of God may be foiled in a single battle against temptation (as Peter was) but at last he is victorious. Now, if a saint be crowned victor, if the world be conquered by him, he must needs persevere. I come next to answer some objections of the Arminians.

1st, The first objection of Arminians, is, *If a believer shall persevere in grace, then, to what purpose are all those admonitions in scripture? 'Let him take heed lest he fall,' 1 Cor. x. 12. And, Heb. iv. 1. 'Let us fear, lest any of you seem to come short.' These admonitions seem to be superfluous and vain, if a saint shall certainly persevere.*

*Ans.* No, these counsels and admonitions are necessary to caution believers against carelessness; they are as goads and spurs to quicken them to a greater diligence in working our salvation. These admonitions do not imply the saints can fall away, but they are preservatives to keep them from falling away. Christ told some of his disciples, they should abide in him, yet he exhorts them to abide in him, John xv. His exhorting them was not in the least to question their abiding in him, but to awaken their diligence, and make them pray the harder, that they might abide in him.

2dly, The second objection is, Heb. vi. 4. *It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have felt the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance.*

*Ans.* This place of scripture hath no force in it; for the apostle here speaks of hypocrites; he shews how far they may go, yet fall away. 1. *They who were once enlightened:* Men may have great illuminations, yet fall away. Was not Judas enlightened? 2. *They have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost;*

the common gifts of the Spirit, not the special grace. 3. *They have tasted the good word of God.* Tasting here is opposed to eating; the hypocrite may have a kind of taste of the sweetness of religion, but his taste doth not nourish. There is a great deal of difference between one that takes a gargle, and a cordial; the gargle only washeth his mouth, he takes it, and puts it out again; but a cordial is drunk down, which nourisheth and cherisheth the spirits. The hypocrite, who hath only some smack or taste of religion (as one tastes a gargle) may fall away. 4. *And have felt the powers of the world to come:* that is, they may have such apprehensions of the glory of heaven, as to be affected with it, and seem to have some joy in the thoughts of it, yet fall away; as in the parable of the stony ground, Mat. xiii. 20. All this is spoken of the hypocrite; but it doth not therefore prove, that the true believer, who is effectually wrought upon, can fall away. Though comets fall, it doth not therefore follow, that true stars fall. That this scripture speaks not of sound believers, is clear from ver. 9. 'But we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation.'

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## OF PERSEVERANCE.

1 PET. i. 5. *Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.*

*Use 1.* SEE the excellency of grace, it perseveres: other things are but for a season: health and riches are sweet, but they are but for a season: but grace is a blossom of eternity. The seed of God remains, 1 John iii. 9. Grace may suffer an eclipse, not a dissolution. It is called substance, for its solidity, Prov. viii. 21. and durable riches, for its permanency, Prov. vii. 18. It lasts as long as the soul, as heaven lasts. Grace is not like a lease which soon expires, but it runs parallel with eternity.

2. See here that which may excite in the saints everlasting love and gratitude to God. What can make us love God more than the fixedness of his love to us? He is not only the author of grace, but finisher: his love is perpetuated and carried on to our salvation. John x. 27. 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life.' *My sheep*, there is election; *hear my voice*, there is vocation; *and I know them*, there is justification; *and I give unto them eternal life*, there is glorification. How may this make us love God, and set up the monuments and trophies of his praise! how much have we done to cause God to withdraw



his Spirit, and suffer us to fall finally ! yet that he should keep us, let his name be blessed, and his memorial eternized, who keepeth the feet of his saints, 1 Sam. ii. 9.

3. See whence it is that saints do persevere in holiness : it is solely to be ascribed to the power of God ; we are kept by his power, kept as in a garrison : it is a wonder any Christian perseveres, if you consider, (1.) *Corruption within*. The tares are mingled with the wheat ; there is more sin than grace, yet grace is habitually predominant. Grace is like a spark in the sea, a wonder it is not quenched : a wonder sin doth not destroy grace, that it doth not do, as sometimes the nurse to the infant, overlay it, and it dies ; so that this infant of grace is not smothered by corruption. (2.) *Temptations without*. Satan envies us happiness, and he raiseth his militia, stirs up persecution : he shoots his fiery darts of temptation ; they are called darts for their swiftness, fiery for their terribleness. We are every day beset with devils : as it was a wonder Daniel was kept alive in the midst of the roaring lions ; so, that there are many roaring devils about us, and yet we are not torn in pieces. Now, whence is it, we stand against these powerful temptations ? We are kept by the power of God. (3.) *The world's golden snares, riches and pleasure*, Luke xviii. 24. 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God ?' How many have been cast away upon these golden sands, 2 Tim. iv. 10. as Demas ? What a wonder any soul perseveres in religion, that the earth doth not choke the fire of all good affections ? Whence is this but from the power of God ? We are kept by his power.

*Use 2. Consolation*. This doctrine of perseverance is as Bezoar stone ; it is a sovereign cordial to keep up the spirits of the godly from fainting. There is nothing doth more trouble a child of God than this, he fears he shall never hold out ; these weak legs of mine will never carry me to heaven. But perseverance is an inseparable fruit of sanctification ; *Once in Christ, and for ever in Christ*. A believer may fall from some degrees of grace, but not from the state of grace : an Israelite could never wholly sell or alienate his land of inheritance, Luke xxv. 23. A type of our heavenly inheritance, which cannot be wholly alienated from us. How despairing is the Arminian doctrine of falling from grace ? To-day a saint, to-morrow a reprobate ; to-day a Peter, to-morrow a Judas. This must needs cut the sinews of a Christian's endeavour, and be as the boring an hole in the vessel, to make all the wine of his joy run out. Were the Arminian doctrine true, how could the apostle say, the seed of God remains in him ; 1 John iii. 9. and the anointing of God abides ? 1 John ii. 27. What comfort were it to have one's name written in the book of life, if it might be blotted out again ? but, be assured, for your comfort, grace, if true, though never

so weak, shall persevere: though a Christian hath but little grace to trade with, yet he need not fear breaking, because God doth not only give him a stock of grace, but will keep his stock for him. *Gratia concutitur, non excutitur*, Aug. Grace may be shaken with fears and doubts, but it cannot be plucked up by the roots. Fear not falling away. If any thing should hinder the saints perseverance, then it must be either sin or temptation; but neither of these: 1. Not the sins of believers. That which humbles them shall not damn them: but their sins are a mean to humble them; they gather grapes of thorns; from the thorn of sin, they gather the grape of humility. 2. Not temptation: the devil lays the train of his temptation to blow up the fort of a saint's grace; but this cannot do it. Temptation is a medicine for security; the more Satan tempts, the more the saints pray. When Paul had the messenger of Satan to buffet him, 2 Cor. xii. 8. 'For this I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.' Thus nothing can break off a believer from Christ, or hinder his perseverance. Let this wine be given to such as are of an heavy heart: this perseverance is comfort, 1. In the loss of worldly comforts. When our goods may be taken away, our grace cannot, Luke x. 42. 'Mary hath chosen the better part, which cannot be taken from her.' 2. In the hour of death. When all things fail, friends take their farewell of us; yet still grace remains. Death may separate all things else from us but grace: a Christian may lay on his death-bed, as Olevian, once, "Sight is gone, speech and hearing are departing, but the loving-kindness of God will never depart."

Q. 1. *What motives and incentives are there to make Christians persevere?*

Ans. 1. It is the crown and glory of a Christian to persevere, *In Christianis non initia sed fide laudantur*, Prov. xvi. 31. 'The hoary head is a crown of glory, if found in the way of righteousness.' When grey hairs shine with golden virtues, this is a crown of glory. The church of Thyatira was best at last, Rev. ii. 19. 'I know thy patience and thy works, and the last to be more than the first.' The excellency of a building is not in having the first stone laid, but when it is finished. The glory and excellency of a Christian is, when he hath finished the work of faith.

2. You are within a few days march of heaven. Salvation is near to you, Rom. xiii. 11. 'Now is your salvation nearer than when we believed.' Christians, it is but a while, and you shall have done weeping and praying, and be triumphing; you shall put off your mourning, and put on white robes: you shall put off your armour, and put on a victorious crown: you who have made a good progress in religion, you are almost ready to commence and take your degree of glory; now is your salvation

nearer than when you began to believe. When a man is almost at the end of a race, will he now tire, or faint away? O labour to persevere, your salvation is now nearer; you have but a little way to go, and you will set your foot in heaven. Though the way be up-hill and full of thorns, viz. sufferings, yet you have gone the greatest part of your way, and shortly you shall rest from your labours.

3. How sad is it not to persevere in holiness? You expose yourselves to the reproaches of men, and the rebukes of God. *First*, to the reproaches of men. They will deride both you and your profession, Luke xiv. 28. 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' Such is he who begins in religion, and doth not persevere: he is the *ludibrium*, and derision of all. *Secondly*, to the rebukes of God. God is most severe against such as fall off, because they bring an evil report upon religion. Apostacy breeds a bitter worm in conscience; what a worm did Spira feel! and it brings swift damnation; it is a drawing back to perdition, Heb. x. 48. God will make his sword drunk with the blood of apostates.

4. The promises of mercy are annexed only to perseverance, Rev. iii. 5. 'He that overcometh, shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.' *Non pugnanti, sed vincenti dabitur corona*, Aug. The promise is not to him that fights, but that overcomes, Luke xxii. 28. 'Ye are they which have continued with me, and I appoint unto you a kingdom.' The promise of a kingdom, saith Chrysostom, is not made to them that heard Christ or followed him, but that continued with him. Perseverance carries away the garland; no man hath the crown set upon his head, but he who holds out to the end of the race. O therefore, by all this, be persuaded to persevere; God makes no account of such as do not persevere. Who esteems of corn that sheds before harvest, or fruit that falls from the tree before it be ripe?

Q. 2. *What expedients or means may be used for a Christian's perseverance?*

Ans. 1. Take heed of those things, which will make you desist and fall away. *1st*, Take heed of presumption. Do not presume upon your own strength; exercise an holy fear and jealousy over your own hearts, Rom. xi. 12. 'Be not high-minded, but fear.' 1 Cor. x. 12. 'Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.' It was Peter's sin, he leaned more upon his grace than upon Christ, and then he fell. A Christian hath cause to fear lest the lusts and deceit of his heart betray him: take heed of presuming; fear begets prayer, prayer begets strength, and strength begets steadfastness. *2dly*, Take heed of hypocrisy. Judas was first a sly hypocrite, and then a traitor, Psal. lxxviii. 37. 'Their heart was not right with God,



neither were they stedfast in his covenant.' If there be any venom or malignity in the blood, it will break forth into a plague-fore. The venom of hypocrisy is in danger of breaking out into the plague-fore of scandal. *3dly*, Beware of a vile heart of unbelief, Heb. iii. 12. 'Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.' Whence is apostacy but from incredulity? men do not believe the truth, and then they fall from the truth. Unbelieving and unstable go together, Psal. lxxviii. 22. 'They believed not in God,' *ver.* 41. 'They turned back.'

2. If you would be pillars in the temple of God, and persevere in sanctity.

*First*, Look that you enter into religion upon a right ground; be well grounded in the distinct knowledge of God: you must know the love of the Father, the merit of the Son, and the efficacy of the Holy Ghost. Such as know not God aright, will by degrees fall off. The Samaritans sometimes sided with the Jews when they were in favour, afterwards disclaimed all kindred with them, when Antiochus persecuted the Jews: and no wonder the Samaritans were no more fixed in religion, if you consider what Christ saith of the Samaritans, John iv. 22. 'Ye worship ye know not what:' they were ignorant of the true God. Let your knowledge of God be clear, and serve him purely out of choice, and then you will persevere, Psal. cxix. 30. 'I have chosen the way of truth, I have stuck unto thy testimonies.'

*Secondly*, Get a real work of grace in your heart, Heb. xiii. 9. 'It is a good thing that the heart is established with grace.' Nothing will hold out but grace: it is only this anointing abides; paint will fall off. Get an heart-changing work, 1 Cor. vi. 11. 'But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified.' Be not content with baptism of water, without baptism of the Spirit: the reason men persevere not in religion, is for want of a vital principle: a branch must needs wither, that hath no root to grow upon.

*Thirdly*, If you would persevere be very sincere. Perseverance grows only upon the root of sincerity, Psal. xxv. 21. 'Let integrity and uprightness preserve me.' The breast-plate of sincerity can never be shot through. How many storms was Job in? the devils set against him, his wife tempted him to curse God, his friends accused him of being a hypocrite; here was enough, one would think, to have made him to desist from religion: yet for all this, he perseveres. What preserved him? it was his sincerity, Job xxvii. 6. 'My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.'

*Fourthly*, If you would persevere, be humble, St. Chrysostom

calls it the mother of all the graces. God lets a poor humble Christian stand, when others of higher parts, and who have higher thoughts of themselves, fall off by apostacy. They are likest to persevere, whom God will give most grace to: 'But he gives grace to the humble,' 1 Pet. v. 5. They are likest to persevere, who have God dwelling in them: 'But God dwells in the humble soul,' Isa. lvii. 15. *Non requiescit Spiritus sanctus nisi super humilem*, Bern. The lower the tree roots in the earth, the firmer it is; the more the soul is rooted in humility, the more established it is, and is in less danger of falling away.

*Fifthly*, If perseverance cherish the grace of faith. Faith doth *stabilere animum*, 2 Cor. i. 24. 'By faith ye stand.' 1. Faith knits us to Christ, as the members are knit to the head by nerves and sinews. 2. Faith fills us with love to God; 'it works by love,' Gal. v. 6. And he who loves God, will rather die than desert him: the soldier who loves his general, will die in his service. 3. Faith gives us a prospect of heaven, it shews us an invisible glory; and he who hath Christ in his heart, and a crown in his eye, will not faint away. O cherish faith, keep your faith, and your faith will keep you: while the pilot keeps his ship, his ship keeps him.

*Sixthly*, If persevere, let us engage the power of God to help us; we are kept by the power of God. The child is safest when it is held in the nurse's arms, so are we, when we are held in the arms of free grace. It is not our holding God, but his holding us, preserves us. When a boat is tied to a rock, it is secure: so, when we are fast tied to the Rock of Ages, then we are impregnable. O engage God's power to help us to persevere. We engage his power by prayer: let us pray to him to keep us, Ps. xvii. 5. 'Hold up my goings in thy path, that my footsteps slip not.' It was a good prayer of Beza, *Domine, quod cepisti perfice, ne in portu naufragium accadat*; 'Lord, perfect what thou hast begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven.'

*Seventhly*, If persevere, set often before your eyes the noble examples of those who have persevered in religion; *Quod martyres, quod fideles in cælis, jam, triumphant*? What a glorious army of saints and martyrs have gone before us; how constant to the death was St. Paul? Acts xxi. 13. How persevering in the faith were Ignatius, Polycarp, Athanasius? These were stars in their orb, pillars in the temple of God. Let us look on their zeal and courage, and be animated, Heb. xii. 1. 'Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us.' The crown is set at the end of the race; if we win the race, we shall wear the crown.

## A BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGE AT DEATH.

PHIL. i. 21. *For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

SAINT Paul was a great admirer of Christ, he desired to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 2. No julep to the blood of Christ; and in the text, '*To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*'

First, *To me to live is Christ.* We must understand Paul of a spiritual life. *To me to live is Christ*, i. e. Christ is my life; so Greg. Nyssen. Or thus, my life is made up of Christ; as a wicked man's life is made up of sin; so Paul's life was made up of Christ, he was full of Christ. But, that I may give you the sense of the text more fully, take it in these three particulars;

1. Christ is the principle of my life.

2. Christ is the end of my life.

3. Christ is the joy of my life.

1. *To me to live is Christ*, i. e. Christ is the principle of my life. I fetch my spiritual life from Christ, as the branch fetcheth its sap from the root, Gal. ii. 20. '*Christ liveth in me.*' Jesus Christ is an head of influence; he sends forth life and spirits into me, to quicken me to every holy action. Thus, *To me to live is Christ*; Christ is the principle of my life: from his fulness I live, as the vine branch lives from the root.—

2. *To me to live is Christ*, i. e. Christ is the end of my life; I live not to myself but to Christ. So Grotius and Caufabon, *Christo servio*, "*To me to live is Christ*," all my living is to do service to Christ, Rom. xiv. 8. '*Whether we live, we live unto the Lord.*' When we lay out ourselves wholly for Christ; as the factor trades for the merchant, so we trade for Christ's interest, we propagate his gospel; the design of our life is to exalt Christ, and make the crown upon his head flourish. Now, it may be said, *To us to live is Christ*, our whole life is a living to Christ.

3. *To me to live is Christ*, i. e. Christ is the joy of my life, Psal, xlii. 4. '*God my exceeding joy*,' or the cream of my joy. A Christian rejoiceth in Christ's righteousness; he can rejoice in Christ, when worldly joys are gone: when the tulip in a garden withers, a man rejoiceth in his jewels; when relations die, a saint can rejoice in Christ the pearl of price. In this sense, *To me to live is Christ*, he is the joy of my life; if Christ were gone, my life would be a death to me.

*Use.* It should exhort us all to labour to say as the Apostle, *To me to live is Christ.* Christ is the principle of my life, the end of my life, the joy of my life, *To me to live is Christ*: and then we may comfortably conclude, that to die shall be gain.



*Secondly*, And that brings me to the second part of the text, 'And to die is gain.'

*Doct.* To a believer death is great gain. A saint can tell what his losses for Christ are, but he cannot tell how great his gains are at death; 'To me to die is gain.' Death to a believer, is *crepusculum gloriæ*, the day-break of eternal brightness. To shew fully what a believer's gains are at death, were a task too great for an angel; all hyperboles fall short, the reward of glory exceeds our very faith: only let me give you some dark views and imperfect lineaments of that infinite glory the saints shall gain at the hour of death; 'To me to die is gain.'

1. Believers at death shall gain a writ of ease from all sins and troubles; they shall be in a state of impeccability; sin expires with their life. I think sometimes what an happy state that will be, never to have a sinful thought more: and they shall have a *quietas est* from their troubles. Here David cried out, 'My life is spent with griefs, and my years with sighing,' Psal. xxxi. 10. *Quid est diu vivere nisi diu torqueri*, Aug. Life begins with a cry, and ends with a groan; but at death all troubles die.

2. Believers at death shall gain the glorious sight of God. They shall see him; *First*, Intellectually with the eyes of their mind, which Divines call the beatifical vision; if there were not such an intellectual sight of God, how do the spirits of just men, made perfect, see him? *Secondly*, They shall behold the glorified body of Jesus Christ; and if it be pleasant to behold the sun, then how blessed a sight will it be to see Christ the Sun of righteousness clothed with our human nature, shining in glory above the angels? Through Christ's flesh, as through a transparent glass, some bright rays and beams of the Godhead shall display themselves to glorified eyes: the sight of God through Christ will be very complacential and delightful; the terror of God's essence will be taken away; God's majesty will be mixed with beauty, and sweetened with clemency; it will be infinitely delightful to the saints to see the amiable aspects and smiles of God's face. Which brings me to the third thing.

3. The saints at death shall not only have a sight of God, but shall enjoy the love of God; there shall be no more a vail on God's face, nor his smiles chequered with frowns, but God's love shall discover itself in all its orient beauty and fragrant sweetness. Here the saints pray for God's love, and they have a few drops; but there they shall have as much as their vessel can receive. To know this love that passeth knowledge, this will cause a jubilation of spirit, and create such holy raptures of joy in the saints, as are superlative, and would soon overwhelm them, if God did not make them able to bear.

4. Believers at death shall gain a celestial palace, an house not made with hands, 2. Cor. v. 1. Here the saints are straitened for room, they have but mean cottages to live in ; but they shall have a royal palace to live in : here is but there sojourniug house, there in heaven is there mansion-house, an house built high above all the visible orbs, an house bespangled with light, Col. i. 12. enriched with pearls and precious stones, Rev. xxi. 19. And this is not their landlord's house, but their father's house, John xiv. 2. and this house stands all upon consecrated ground ; it is set out by transparent glass, to shew the holiness of it, Rev. xxi. 27.

5. Believers at death shall gain the sweet society of glorified saints and angels ; this will add something to the felicity of heaven, as every star adds some lustre to the firmament. *First*, The society of the glorified saints ; we shall see them in their souls, as well as in their bodies : their bodies shall be so clear and bright, that we shall see their souls shining through their bodies, as the wine through the glass ; and believers at death shall have converse with the saints glorified. And how delightful will that be, when they shall be freed from all their sinful corruptions, pride, envy, passion, censoriousness, which are scars upon them here to disfigure them ? in heaven there shall be perfect love among the saints ; they shall, as the olive and myrtle, sweetly embrace each other ; the saints shall know one another (as Luther speaks). If in the transfiguration Peter knew Moses and Elias, which he never saw before, Matth. xvii. 3. then much more, in the glorified state, the saints shall perfectly know one another, though they never saw them before. *Secondly*, The saints at death shall behold the angels with the glorified eye of their understanding. The wings of the cherubims (representing the angels) were made of fine gold, to denote both their sanctity and splendor ; the angels are compared to lightning, Mat. xxviii. 3. because of those sparkling beams of majesty, which as lightning shoot from them. And when saints and angels shall meet and sing together in concert in the heavenly choir, what divine harmony, what joyful triumphs will it create ?

6. Believers at death shall gain perfection of holiness. Here grace was but *in cunabulis* in its cradle, very imperfect ; we cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting ; believers are said to receive but *primitias Spiritus*, the first fruits of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 23. But at death the saints shall arrive at perfection, their knowledge clear, their sanctity perfect ; their sun shall be in its full meridian splendor. They need not then pray for increase of grace ; they shall love God as much as they would love him, and as much as he desires to have them love him : they shall be then, in respect of holiness, as the angels of God.

7. At death, the saints shall gain a royal magnificent feast.

I told you before what a glorious palace they shall have ; but a man may starve in a house, if there be no cheer. The saints at death shall have a royal banquet, shadowed out in scripture by a marriage-supper, Rev. xix. 9. Bullinger and Gregory the great understand, by that marriage-supper of the lamb, the stately, magnificent festival the saints shall have in heaven ; they shall feed on the tree of life, Rev. xxii. They shall have the heavenly nectar and ambrosia, ' the spiced wine, and the juice of the pomegranate, Cant. viii. 2. This royal supper of the Lamb will not only satisfy hunger but prevent it, Rev. vii. 16. ' They shall hunger no more.' Nor can there be any surfeit at this feast, because a fresh course will be continually serving in : new and fresh delights will spring from God ; therefore the tree of life in paradise is said to bear twelve sorts of fruit, Rev. xxii. 2.

8. Believers at death shall gain honour and dignity, they shall reign as kings ; therefore we read of the ensigns of their royalty, their white robes and crowns celestial, 1 Tim. iv. 7. We read that the doors of the holy of holies were made of palm-trees and open flowers, covered with gold, 1 Kings vi. 35. An emblem of that victory and triumph, and that golden garland of honour wherewith God hath invested the saints glorified. When all worldly honour shall lie in the dust, the mace, the star, the robe of ermine, the imperial diadem, then shall the saints' honour remain ; not one jewel shall be plucked out of their crown ; they shall gain at death a blessed eternity. If the saints could have the least suspicion or fear of losing their glory, it would much cool and embitter their joy ; but their crown fades not away, 1 Pet. v. 4. As the wicked have a worm that never dies, so the elect have a crown that never fades. Ever, is a short word, but hath no ending : *In fine, erit gaudium sine fine*, Bern. 2 Cor. iv. 18. ' The things which are not seen are eternal.' Psal. xvi. 11. ' At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.' Who can span eternity ? millions of ages stand but for cyphers in eternity. This is the *elah*, or highest strain of the saint's glory ; ever in Christ's bosom.

Q. *How come the saints to have all this gain ?*

Ans. Believers have a right to all this gain at death, upon divers accounts : by virtue of the Father's donation, the Son's purchase, the Holy Ghost's earnest, and faith's acceptance. Therefore the state of future glory is called the saints' proper inheritance, Col. i. 12. They are heirs of God, and have a right to inherit.

Use 1. See the great difference between the death of the godly and the wicked ; the godly are gainers at death, the wicked are great losers at death. They lose four things :

(1.) They lose the world ; and that is a great loss to the



wicked : they laid up their treasure upon earth ; and to be turned out of it all at once, is a great loss.

(2.) They lose their souls, Matth. xvi. 26, 27. The soul was at first a noble piece of coin, which God stamped his own image upon : this celestial spark is more precious than the whole globe of the world ; but the sinner's soul is lost ; not that the souls of the wicked are annihilated at death, but dammed.

(3.) They lose heaven. Heaven is *sedes beatorum*, the royal seat of the blessed ; it is the region of happiness, the map of perfection. There is that manna which is angels food ; there is the garden of spices, the bed of perfumes, the river of pleasure. Sinners, at death, lose all this.

(4.) They lose their hopes ; for though they lived wickedly, yet they hoped God was merciful, and they hoped they should go to heaven. Their hope was not an anchor, but a spider's web. Now, at death, they lose their hopes, they see they did but flatter themselves into hell, Job viii. 14. ' Whose hope shall be cut off.' That is sad, to have a man's life and his hope cut off together.

*Use 2.* If the saints gain such glorious things at death ; then how may they desire death ? doth not every one desire preferment ? *Nemo ante funera felix*. Faith gives a title to heaven, death a possession. Though we should be desirous of doing service here, yet we should be ambitious of being with Christ, Phil. i. 23. We should be content to live, but willing to die. Is it not a blessed thing to be freed from sin, and to lie for ever in the bosom of divine love ? is it not a blessed thing to meet our godly relations in heaven, and to be singing divine anthems of praise among the angels ? doth not the bride desire the marriage-day, especially if she were to be matched unto the crown ? what is the place we now live in, but a place of banishment from God ? we are in a wilderness, while the angels live at court. Here we are combating with Satan, and should not we desire to be out of the bloody field, where the bullets of temptation fly so fast, and to receive a victorious crown ? think what it will be to have always a smiling aspect from Christ's face ; to be brought into the banqueting-house, and have the banner of his love displayed over you. O ye saints, desire death, it is your ascension-day to heaven. *Egrederet anima Egrederet*, said Hilarion on his death-bed ; " Go forth, my soul, what fearest thou ? " Another holy man said, " Lord, lead me to that glory which I have seen as through a glass ; haste, Lord, and do not tarry." Some plants thrive best when they are transplanted : believers, when they are by death transplanted, cannot choose but thrive, because they have Christ's sweet sun-beams shining upon them : and what though the passage through the valley of the shadow of

death be troublesome? who would not be willing to pass a tempestuous sea, if he were sure to be crowned so soon as he came to shore.

*Use 3.* Comfort in the loss of our dear and pious relations. They, when they die, are not only taken away from the evil to come, but they are great gainers by death; they leave a wilderness, and go to a paradise; they change their complaints into thanksgivings; they leave their sorrows behind, and enter into the joy of their Lord: why should we weep for their preferment? believers have not their portion paid till the day of their death: God's promise is his bond to make over heaven in reversion to them; but though they have his bond, they do not receive their portion till the day of death. Oh! rejoice to think of their happiness who die in the Lord; to them 'to die is gain:' they are as rich as heaven can make them.

## A BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGE AT DEATH.

PHIL. i. 21. *For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

HOPE is a Christian's anchor, which he casts within the vail, Rom. xii. 12. 'Rejoicing in hope.' A Christian's hope is not in this life, but he 'hath hope in his death,' Prov. xiv. 32. The best of a saint's comfort begins when his life ends: the wicked have all their heaven here, Luke vi. 28. 'Wo unto you, rich, you have received your consolation.' You may make your acquittance, and write "Received in full payment;" Luke xvi. 25. 'Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things.' But a saint's happiness is in reversion; 'The righteous hath hope in his death.' God keeps the best wine till last. If Cato the heathen said, "To me to die is gain: he saw mortality to be a mercy:" then, what may a believer say? Eccl. vii. 1. 'The day of death is better than the day of one's birth.' *Nemo ante funera felix*, Solon. A queen of this land said, she preferred her coffin before her cradle.

Q. 1. *What benefits do believers receive at death?*

Ans. 1. They have great immunities. 2. They pass immediately into a state of glory. 3. Their bodies are united to Christ in the grave till the resurrection.

1. The saints, at death, have great immunities and freedoms. An apprentice, when out of his time, is made free: when the saints are out of their time of living, then they are made free; not made free till death. 1. At death they are freed from a body of sin. There are in the best *reliquiæ peccati*: some remainders

and reliques of corruption, Rom. vii. 24. 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!' By the body of death is meant the *congeries*, the mass and lump of sin. It may well be called a body for its weightiness, and a body of death for its noisomeness. (1.) It weighs us down; sin hinders us from doing good. A Christian is like a bird that would be flying up, but hath a string tied to its legs to hinder it; so he would be flying up to heaven with the wings of desire, but sin hinders him, Rom. vii. 15. 'The good that I would, I do not.' A Christian is like a ship that is under sail, and at anchor; grace would sail forward, but sin is the anchor that holds it back. (2.) Sin is more active in its sphere than grace: how stirring was lust in David, when his grace lay dormant? (3.) Sin sometimes gets the mastery, and leads a saint captive, Rom. vii. 19. 'The evil that I would not, that I do.' Paul was like a man carried down the stream, and could not bear up against it. How oft is a child of God overpowered with pride and passion? Therefore Paul calls sin, a law in his members, Rom. vii. 24. it binds as a law; it hath a kind of jurisdiction over the soul, as Cæsar had over the senate. (4.) Sin defiles the soul, it is like a stain to beauty, it turns the soul's azure brightness into sable. (5.) Sin debilitates us, it disarms us of our strength, 2 Sam. iii. 39. 'I am this day weak, though anointed king:' so, though a saint be crowned with grace, yet he is weak, though anointed a spiritual king. (6.) Sin is ever restless, Gal. v. 17. 'The flesh lusts against the spirit.' It is an inmate that is always quarreling; like Marcellus, that Roman captain, of whom Hannibal said, whether he did beat, or was beaten, he would never be quiet. (7.) Sin adheres to us, we cannot get rid of it; it may be compared to a wild fig-tree growing on a wall; though the roots are pulled up, yet there are some fibres, some strings of it in the joints of the stone-work, which cannot be gotten out. (8.) Sin mingles with our duties and graces; we cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting. This makes a child of God weary of his life, and makes him water his couch with his tears, to think sin so strong a party, and he should often offend that God whom he loves; this made Paul cry out, *Miser ego homo!* O wretched man that I am! Hence Paul did not cry out of his affliction, of his prison-chain, but of the body of sin. Now a believer at death shall be freed from sin: he is not taken away in, but from his sins; he shall never have a vain, proud thought more; he shall never grieve the Spirit of God any more: sin brought death into the world; and death shall carry sin out of the world. 'The Persians had a certain day in the year in which they killed all serpents and venomous creatures; such a day will the day of death be to a believer: it will destroy all his sins, which, like so many serpents,



have stung him. Death smites a believer, as the angel did Peter, he made his chains fall off: so death makes all the chains of sin fall off, Acts xii. 7. Believers at death are made perfect in holiness, Heb. xii. 23. 'The spirits of just men made perfect.' At death the souls of believers recover their virgin-purity: O what a blessed privilege is this, to be *sine macula et ruga*, without spot or wrinkle! Eph. v. 27. to be purer than the sun-beams, to be as free from sin as the angels. This makes a believer so desirous to have his pass to be gone; he would fain live in that pure air, where no black vapours of sin arise.

2. At death the saints shall be freed from all the troubles and incumbrances to which this life is subject. "Sin is the seed sown, and trouble is the harvest reaped," *Eurip.* life and trouble are married together; there is more in life to wean us than to tempt us. Parents divide a portion of sorrow to their children, and yet leave enough for themselves, Job v. 7. 'Man is born to trouble,' he is heir to it, it is his birth-right, you may as well separate weight from lead, as trouble from the life of man. *Quid est diu vivere, nisi diu torqueri?* Aug. King Henry's emblem, a crown hung in a bush of thorns: there is a far greater proportion of bitterness than pleasure in this life, Prov. vii. 17. 'I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.' For one sweet ingredient there were two bitter; for the cinnamon, there were myrrh and aloes. A man's grace will not exempt him from troubles, Gen. xlvii. 9. 'Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.' Though he was a godly patriarch, though he had met with God, Gen. xxxii. 30. He named 'the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face:' yet he had his troubles; 'Few and evil,' &c. There are many things to imbitter life and cause trouble, and death frees us from all. 1. *Care.* The mind is full of perplexed thoughts, how to bring about such a design: how to prevent such an evil: the Greek word for care, comes from a primitive in the Greek, that signifies *To cut the heart in pieces*. Care doth disquiet the mind, waste the spirits: no such bitter bread as the bread of carefulness, Ezek. xii. 19. Care is a spiritual canker, which eats out the comfort of life: death is the cure of care. 2. *Fear.* Fear is the ague of the soul, which sets it a shaking, 1 John iv. 14. 'There is torment in fear.' Fear is like Prometheus' vulture, it gnaws upon the heart. There is a distrustful fear, a fear of want; and a distracting fear, a fear of danger; and a discouraging fear, a fear God doth not love us. These fears leave sad impressions upon the mind; now at death a believer is freed from these torturing fears; he now knows he is passed from death to life, he is as far from fear, as the damned are from hope: the grave buries a Christian's fear. 3. *Labour,* Eccl. i. 18. 'All things are full

of labour.' Some labour in the mine, others among the Muses; God hath made a law, 'In the sweat of thy brows thou shalt eat bread;' but death gives a believer a *quietus est*; it takes him off from his day-labour, Rev. xiv. 13. 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, they rest from their labours.' What needs working, when they have their reward? What needs fighting, when the crown is set on their head? they rest from their labours.

4. *Suffering*: Believers are as a lily among thorns: as the dove among the birds of prey. The wicked have an antipathy against the righteous: and secret hatred will break forth into open violence, Gal. iv. 29. 'He that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit.' The dragon is described with seven heads and ten horns, Rev. xii. 3. He plotteth with the one, and pusheth with the other. But at death the godly shall be freed from the molestations of the wicked; they shall never be pestered with these vermin more, Job iii. 17. 'There (viz. in the grave) the wicked cease from troubling.' Death doth to a believer, as Joseph of Arimathea did to Christ, it takes him down from the cross, and gives him a writ of ease: the eagle, that flies high, cannot be stung with the serpent: Death gives the soul the wing of the eagle, that it flies above all these venomous serpents here below.

5. *Temptation*: though Satan be a conquered enemy, yet he is a restless enemy, 1 Pet. v. 8. He walketh about: the devil is always going his diocese, he hath his snares and his darts; one he tempts with riches, another with beauty. It is no small trouble to be continually followed with temptations; it is as bad as for a virgin to have her chastity daily assaulted: but death will free a child of God from temptation, he shall never be vexed more with the old serpent. After death hath shot its dart at us, the devil shall have done shooting his; though grace puts a believer out of the devil's possession, only death frees him from the devil's temptation.

6. *Sorrow*: a cloud of sorrow gathers in the heart, and drops into tears, Psal. xxxi. 10. 'My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing.' It was a curse, Gen. iii. 16. 'In sorrow thou shalt bring forth.' Many things occasion sorrow; sickness, law-suits, treachery of friends, disappointment of hopes, loss of estate, Ruth i. 20. 'Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.' Sorrow is the evil spirit that haunts us; the world is a *Bochim*, Rachel wept for her children; some grieve that they have no children, and others grieve that their children are undutiful. Thus we spend our years with sighing; it is a valley of tears: but death is the funeral of all our sorrows, Rev. vii. 17. 'And God shall wipe away all tears.' Then Christ's spouse puts off her mourning: how can the children of the bride chamber mourn, when the bride-groom

shall be with them; Matth. ix. 15. Thus death gives a believer his *quietus est*: it frees him from sin and trouble: though the apostle calls death the last enemy, 1 Cor. xv. 11. yet it is the best friend: 'To me to die is gain.'

*Use 1.* See here that which may make a true saint willing to die: death will set him out of gun-shot; free him from sin and trouble: there is no cause of weeping, to leave a valley of tears; the world is the stage on which sin and misery are acted. Believers are here in a strange country, why then should they not be willing to go out of it? Death beats off their setters of sin, and sets them free, who go weeping of a goal: besides our own sins, the sins of others. The world is a place where Satan's seat is; a place where we see God daily dishonoured. Lot (who was a bright star in a dark night) his righteous soul was vexed with the unclean conversation of the wicked, 2 Pet. iii. 7. To see God's sabbaths broken, his truths adulterated, his glory eclipsed, is that which wounds a godly heart: this made David cry out, Psal. cxx. 5. 'Wo is me that I dwell in Mesech, that I sojourn in the tents of Kedar:' Kedar was Arabia, where were Ishmael's posterity; this was a cut to David's heart, to dwell there. O then be willing to depart out of the tents of Kedar.

2. The bodies of believers are united to Christ in the grave, and shall rest there till the resurrection. They are said to sleep in Jesus, 1 Theff. iv. 14. The dust of believers is part of Christ's body mystical. The grave is a dormitory or place of rest to the saints, where their bodies quietly sleep in Christ, till they are awakened out of their sleep by the trumpet of the archangel.

*Qu. 2.* But how shall we know that we shall gain all this at death, to be freed from sin and trouble, and to have our bodies united to Christ in the grave?

*Ans.* If we are believers, then we gain all this at death. 'To me, saith Paul, to die is gain:' to me, *quatenus*, a believer. Are we such? Have we this blessed faith? Faith, wherever it is, is operative. Lapidaries say, there is no precious stone but hath *virtutem insitam*, some hidden virtue in it: so I may say of faith, it hath some secret virtue in it: it anchors the soul on Christ: it hath both a justifying and sanctifying virtue in it; it fetcheth blood out of Christ's sides to pardon, and water out of his sides to purge: it works by love; it constrains to duty, it makes the head study for Christ, the tongue confess him, the hands work for him. I have read of a father who had three sons, and, being to die, left in his will all his estate to that son who could find his ring with the jewel which had an healing virtue. The case was brought before the judges; the two elder sons counterfeited a ring, but the younger son brought the true



ring, which was proved by the virtue of it : whereupon his father's estate went to him. To this ring I may compare faith : there is a counterfeit faith in the world ; but if we can find this ring of faith which hath the healing virtue in it, to purify the heart, this is the true faith which gives us an interest in Christ, and entitles us to all these privileges at death, to be freed from sin and sorrow, and to have our bodies united to Christ, while they are in the grave.

3. I should now come to the third privilege at death, the souls of believers pass immediately into glory. Where I shall lead you to the top of mount Pisgah, and give you a short view of the glory of heaven.

## A BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGE AT DEATH.

PHIL. i. 21. *And to die is gain.*

At death the souls of believers pass into glory : death brings *malorum omnium ademptionem : omnium ademptionem* : death is the day-break of eternal brightness. And here I shall lead you to the top of mount Pisgah, and give you a glimpse of the holy land.

Q. 1. *What is comprehended in glory ?*

Ans. Glory is *status omnium bonorum aggregatione perfectus*, Boetius. It is a perfect state of bliss which consists in the accumulation and heaping together all those good things which immortal souls are capable of. And truly here I am at a loss ; all that I can say falls short of the celestial glory. Apelles' pencil cannot delineate it ; angels' tongues cannot express it : we shall never understand glory fully, till we are in heaven : only let me give you some dark views, and some imperfect lineaments of that state of glory saints shall arrive at after death.

1. The first and most sublime part of the glory of heaven, is the full and sweet fruition of God : *ipse Deus sufficit ad premium*, Aug. We are apt to think the happiness of heaven is in being free from pain and misery : but the very quintessence of happiness, is the enjoyment and fruition of God ; this is the diamond-ring of glory : God is an infinite inexhaustible fountain of joy ; and to have him, is to have all. Now the enjoyment of God implies three things.

1. It implies our seeing of God.

2. Our loving of God.

3. God's loving us.

1. The enjoying of God implies our seeing of God, 1 John

Q q 2

iii. 2. 'We shall see him as he is.' Here we see him as he is not: not mutable, mortal; there as he is.

Q. 2. *How shall we see God?*

Ans. 1. We shall see him intellectually, with the eyes of our mind. This divines call the beatifical vision; we shall have a full knowledge of God, though not know him fully. If there were not such an intellectual sight of God, then how do the spirits of just men made perfect see God? This sight of God will be very glorious; as when a king, on his coronation day, shews himself in all his royalty and magnificence.

2. We shall corporally behold the glorified body of Jesus Christ: and if it be a pleasant thing to behold the sun, Eccl. xi. 7. then, how blessed a sight will it be to behold the Sun of righteousness; to see Christ clothed in our human nature, sitting in glory above the angels! Solomon saith, 'the eye is not satisfied with seeing,' Eccl. i. 8. But sure the eyes of saints will be satisfied with seeing that orient brightness which shall shine from the beautiful body of Christ. It must needs be satisfying, because through Christ's flesh some rays and beams of the Godhead shall gloriously display themselves. God's excellent majesty would overwhelm us; but through the vail of Christ's flesh we shall behold the divine glory.

3. Our seeing God will be transforming. We shall so see him, as to be in some measure assimilated and changed into his image, 1 John iii. 2. 'We shall be like him.' If, when Moses was with God on the mount, and had but some imperfect sight of his glory, 'Moses' face shined,' Exod. xxxiv. 33. How shall the saints glorified shine, being always in God's presence, and having some beams of his glory put upon them? 'We shall be like him.' One that is deformed, may look on beauty, and not be made beautiful; but the saints shall so see God, as that sight shall transform them into his likeness, Psal. xvii. 15. 'When I awake I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.' Not that the saints shall partake of God's essence: for as the iron in the fire is made fiery yet remains iron still; so the saints, by beholding God's majesty, shall be made glorious creatures, but yet creatures still.

4. Our seeing of God in heaven will be unweariable. Let a man see the rarest sight that is, he will be soon cloyed; when he comes into a garden, and sees delicious walks, fair arbours, pleasant flowers, within a little while he grows weary; but it is not so in heaven; there is no surfeit, *ibi nec fames nec fastidium*, Bern. The saints will never be weary of their prospect, viz. of seeing God; for, God being infinite, there shall be every moment new and fresh delights springing from God into the souls of the glorified.

II. The second thing implied in our enjoying God, is our loving of God. It is a saint's grief, that his heart is like the frozen ocean that he can melt no more in love to God : but in heaven the saints shall be like seraphims burning in divine love : love is a pleasant affection ; ' fear hath a torment in it,' 1 John iv. 18. Love hath joy in it. To love beauty, is delightful : God's amazing beauty will attract the saint's love, and it will be their heaven to love him.

III. The third thing implied in enjoying God, is God's loving us. Were there glory in God, yet if there were not love, it would much eclipse the joys of heaven : but ' God is love,' 1 John iv. 16. The saints glorified cannot love so much as they are loved. What is their love to God's ? What is their star to this sun ; God doth love his people on earth, when they are black as well as comely : they have their imperfections ; O how entirely will he love them, when they are without 'spot, or wrinkle ?' Eph. v. 27.

1. This is the felicity of heaven, to be in the sweet embraces of God's love ; to be the *Hephzibah*, the delight of the King of glory ; to be sunning ourselves in the light of God's countenance. Then the saints shall know that love of Christ which passeth knowledge, Eph. iii. 19. From this glorious manifestation of God's love, will flow infinite joy into the souls of the blessed : therefore heaven is called ' entering into the joy of our Lord,' Mat. xxv. 21. The seeing of God, the loving of God, and being beloved of God, will cause a jubilation of spirit, and create such holy raptures of joy in the saints, as is unspeakable and full of glory, 1 Pet. i. 8. *In Deo quadam dulcedine delectatur anima, imo rapitur*, Aug. Now the saints spend their years with sighing, they weep over their sins and afflictions ; then their water shall be turned into wine, then the vessels of mercy shall be filled and run over with joy ; then they shall have their palm-branches and harps in their hand, Rev. xiv. 2. in token of their triumphs and rejoicing.

2. The second thing comprehended in glory, is the good society there. *First*, There are the angels ; every star adds to the light, those blessed cherubims will welcome us to paradise. If the angels rejoiced so at the conversion of the elect ; how will they rejoice at their coronation ! *Secondly*, There is the company of the saints, Heb. xii. 23. ' The spirits of just men made perfect.'

Q. *Whether shall the saints in glory know each other ?*

Ans. Certainly they shall ; for our knowledge in heaven shall not be diminished but increased. We shall not only know our friends and godly relations, but those glorified saints which we never saw before : it must be so ; for society without acquaintance is not comfortable : and of this opinion were St Austin,



Anselm, Luther. And indeed the scripture seems to hint so much to us; for, if Peter in the transfiguration knew Moses and Elias, whom he never saw before, Mat. xvii. 4. then surely in heaven the saints shall know one another, and be infinitely delighted in each other's company.

3. The third thing comprehended in glory, is perfection in holiness. Holiness is the beauty of God and angels, it makes heaven: What is happiness but the quintessence of holiness? Here a Christian's grace is imperfect, he cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting. He is said to receive but *primitias spiritus*, the first-fruits of the spirit, grace in *feri*, Rom. viii. 23. But at death believers shall arrive at perfection of grace: then this sun shall be in its meridian splendor; then they shall not need to pray for increase of grace, for they shall be as the angels; their light shall be clear as well as their joy full.

4. The fourth thing in glory is dignity and honour; they shall reign as kings: therefore the saints glorified are said to have their *insignia regalia*, their ensigns of royalty, their white robes and their crown, 2 Tim. iv. 7. Cæsar, after his victories, in token of honour, had a chair of ivory set for him in the senate, and a throne in the theatre; the saints, having obtained their victories over sin and Satan, shall be enthroned with Christ in the empyrean heaven. To sit with Christ denotes safety; to sit on the throne, dignity, Rev. iii. 21. 'This honour have all the saints.'

5. The fifth thing in glory, is the harmony and union among the heavenly inhabitants. The devil cannot get his cloven foot into heaven; he cannot conjure up any storms of contention there: there shall be perfect union: there Calvin and Luther are agreed; there is no jarring string in the heavenly music; there is nothing to make any difference, no pride or envy there. Though one star may differ from another, one may have a greater degree of glory, yet every vessel shall be full: there shall the saints and angels sit as olive-plants round about their father's table in love and unity. Then shall they join together in concert, then shall the loud anthems of praise be sung in the heavenly choir.

6. The sixth thing in glory, is a blessed rest, Heb. iv. 9. 'There remains a rest.' *Fœlix transitus a labore ad requiem*. Here we can have no rest, tossed and turned as a ball on racket, 2 Cor. iv. 8. 'We are troubled on every side.' How can a ship rest in a storm? But after death the saints get into their haven. Every thing is quiet in the centre; God is *centrum quietativum animæ*, as the schoolmen, "The centre where the soul doth sweetly acquiesce." A Christian, after his weary marches and battles, shall put off his bloody armour, and rest himself upon the bosom of Jesus, that bed of perfume: when

death hath given the saints the wings of a dove, then they shall fly away to paradise and be at rest.

7. The seventh thing in glory, is eternity, 2 Cor. iv. 17. 'An eternal weight of glory.' 1<sup>st</sup>, Glory is a weight: the Hebrew word for glory (*quod significat pondus*) is a weight: God must make us able to bear it. 2<sup>dly</sup>, An eternal weight. Glory is such a manna as doth not breed worms. If the saints' glory in heaven were but for a time, and they were in fear of losing it, it would eclipse and embitter the joys of heaven; but eternity is written upon their joys. The garland made of flowers of paradise fades not, 1 Pet. v. 4. I have read of a river which they call the day-river, in which time it runs with a full torrent, but at night it is dried up; such are all earthly comforts, they run with a full stream all the day-time of life, but at the night of death they are dried up; but the saints glorified shall drink of the rivers of pleasure for evermore, Psal. xvi. 11. Eternity is the heaven of heavens: *in fine gaudium erit sine fine*, Bern. The joys of heaven as overflowing, so everflowing.

Qu. 2. *When do believers enter upon possession of glory?*

Ans. They pass immediately after death into glory. Some hold, with the Platonists and Lucianists, that the soul dies: but many of the sober heathens believed the soul's immortality. The Romans, when their great men died, caused an eagle to be let loose, and fly about in the air, signifying hereby that the soul was immortal, and did not die with the body. Christ tells us the soul is not capable of killing, Luke xii. 4. therefore not of dying. And as the soul doth not die, so neither doth it sleep in the body for a time: if the soul be at death absent from the body, 2 Cor. v. 8. then it cannot sleep in the body. There is an immediate passage from death to glory, it is but winking, and we shall see God, Luke xxiii. 43. 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' By paradise is meant heaven; the third heaven into which Paul was wrapped (which all hold to be the heaven of the blessed) was called paradise, 2 Cor. xii. 4. Now saith Christ to the thief on the cross, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' His body could not be there, for it was laid in the grave, but it was spoken of his soul, that it should be immediately after death in heaven. Let none be so vain as to talk of purgatory; a soul purged by Christ's blood, needs no fire of purgatory, but goes immediately from a death-bed into a glorified state.

U<sup>se</sup>. 1. See what little cause believers have to fear death, when it brings such glorious benefits; 'to me to die is gain.' Why should the saints fear their preferment? Is it not a blessed thing to see God, to love God, and to lie forever in the bosom of divine love? Is it not a blessed thing to meet our godly relations in heaven? Why should the saints be afraid of their bless-

ings? Is a virgin afraid to be matched into the crown? Now is but the contract, at death is the marriage supper of the Lamb, Rev. xix. 9. What hurt doth death, but takes us from among fiery serpents, and places us among angels? What hurt doth it do, but to clothe us with a robe of immortality? hath he any wrong done, that hath his sackcloth pulled off, and hath cloth of gold put upon him? fear not dying, who cannot live but by dying.

*Use. 2.* You who are real saints, whose hearts are purified by faith, spend much time in musing upon these glorious benefits which you shall have by Christ at death. Thus might you, by a contemplative life, begin the life of angels here, and be in heaven before your time. Eudoxius was so affected with the glory of the sun, that he thought he was born only to behold it: What should we contemplate but celestial glory, when we shall see God face to face? David was got above the ordinary sort of men, he was in the altitudes, Psal. cxxxix. 18. 'I am ever with thee.' A true saint every day takes a turn in heaven, his thoughts and desires are like cherubims flying up to paradise. Can men of the world so delight in looking upon their bags of gold, and fields of corn, and shall not the heirs of heaven take more delight in contemplating their glory in reversion? Could we send forth faith as a spy, and every day view the glory of the Jerusalem above, how would it rejoice us, as it doth the heir to think of the inheritance which is to come into his hand shortly?

*Use 3. Consolation.* This is that which may comfort the saints in two cases.

1. Under their wants; they abound only in wants; the measure is almost spent in the barrel: but be patient in death, and you shall have a supply of all your wants; you shall have a kingdom, and be as rich as heaven can make you. He who hath the promise of an estate, after the expiring of a few years, tho' at present he hath nothing to help himself, yet comforts himself with this, that shortly he shall have an estate come into his hand, 1 John ii. 3. 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be:' we shall be enamelled with glory, and be as rich as the angels.

2. A true saint is, (as Luther) *Hæres crucis*: but this may make us go cheerfully through our sufferings; there are great things laid up in store: there is glory coming, which eye hath not seen; we shall drink of the fruit of the vine in the kingdom of heaven. Though now we drink in a wormwood cup, yet here is sugar to sweeten it: we shall taste of those joys of paradise which exceed our faith, and may be better felt than they can be expressed.



## OF THE RESURRECTION.

JOHN v. 23, 29. *Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

Qu. XXXVIII. *WHAT benefits shall believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*

- Ans.* 1. Their bodies shall be raised up to glory.  
 2. They shall be openly acquitted at the day of judgment.  
 3. They shall be made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God for ever.

I. *The bodies of believers shall be raised up to glory.* The doctrine of the resurrection is a fundamental article of our faith; the apostle puts it among the principles of the doctrine of Christ, Heb. vi. 2. The body shall rise again: we are not so sure to rise out of our beds, as we are to rise out of our graves. The saved body shall rise again. Some hold that the soul shall be clothed with a new body; but then it were improper to call it a resurrection, it would be rather a creation, Job xix. 26. 'Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh, shall I see God.' Not in another flesh, but my flesh, 1 Cor. xv. 53. 'This corruptible shall put on incorruption.'

Qu. 2. *By what arguments may the resurrection be proved?*

*Ans.* Argument 1. By scripture, John vi. 44. 'I will raise him up at the last day.' Isa. xxv. 8. 'He will swallow up death in victory.' That is, by delivering our bodies from the captivity of the grave, wherein death for a time had power over them, 1 Thess. iv. 14. 'Them which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.'

*Arg.* 2. *Christ is risen:* therefore the bodies of the saints must rise. Christ did not rise from the dead as a private person, but as the public head of the church; and the head being raised, the rest of the body shall not always lie in the grave. Christ's rising is a pledge of our resurrection, 2 Cor. iv. 14. 'Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus.' Christ is called the first-fruits of them that sleep, 1 Cor. xv. 20. As the first-fruits is a sure evidence that the harvest is coming on; so the resurrection of Christ is a sure evidence of the rising of our bodies out of the grave. Christ cannot be perfect as he is Christ mystical, unless his members be raised with him.

*Arg. 3.* In respect of God's justice. If God be a just God, then he will reward the bodies of the saints as well as the souls. It cannot be imagined, that the souls of believers should be glorified, and not their bodies : they have served God with their bodies, their bodies have been members of holiness ; their eyes have dropped tears for sin, their hands have relieved the poor, their tongues have set forth God's praise ; therefore justice and equity require that their bodies should be crowned as well as their souls : and how can that be, unless they are raised from the dead ?

*Arg. 4.* If the body did not rise again, then a believer should not be completely happy ; for though the soul can subsist without the body, yet it hath *apetium unionis*, a desire of re-union with the body ; and it is not fully happy till it be clothed with the body : therefore undoubtedly the body shall rise again. If the soul should go to heaven, and not the body, then a believer should be only half-saved.

*Obj. 1.* But some say, as the Virgin Mary to the angel, ' How can this be ? ' so, how can it be, that the body, which is consumed to ashes, should rise again ?

*Ans.* It doth not oppose reason, but transcend it : there are some resemblances of the resurrection in nature. The corn, which is sown in the ground, dies before it springs up, 1 Cor. xv. 36. ' That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.' In winter the fruits of the earth die, in spring there is a resurrection of them : Noah's olive-tree springing after the flood, was a lively emblem of the resurrection. After the passion of our Lord, many of the saints which slept in the grave arose, Matth. xxvii. 52. God can more easily raise the body out of the grave, than we can awake a man out of sleep.

*Obj. 2.* But when the dust of many are mingled together ; how is it possible that a separation should be made and the same numerical body arise ?

*Ans.* If we believe God can create, then he can distinguish the dust of one body from another : do we not see the chymist can, out of several metals mingled together, as gold, silver, alchimy, extract the one from the other, the silver from the gold, the alchimy from silver, and can reduce every metal to its own kind ? And shall we not much more believe, that when our bodies are mingled and confounded with other substances, the wise God is able to make an extraction, and re-invest every soul with its own body ?

*Q. 3.* *Shall none but the bodies of the righteous be raised ?*

*Ans.* Yes, all that are in the graves shall hear Christ's voice, and shall come forth. Acts xxiv. 15. There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. Rev. xx. 12. ' I saw the dead both small and great, stand before God.' But

though all shall be raised out of their graves, yet all shall not be raised alike.

1. The bodies of the wicked shall be raised with ignominy ; those bodies which on the earth did tempt and allure others with their beauty, shall be at the resurrection loathsome to behold ; they shall be ghastly spectacles, as the phrase is, Isa. lxvi. 24. ' They shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.' But the bodies of the saints shall be raised with honour, 1 Cor. xv. 43. ' It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.' The saints bodies then shall shine as sparkling diamonds, Mat. xiii. 53. ' Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun.'

2. The bodies of the saints shall arise out of their graves with triumph : the bodies of the wicked shall come out of the grave with trembling ; as being to receive their fatal doom ; but the godly, when they awake out of the dust, shall sing for joy, Isa. xxvi. 19. ' Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust.' When the archangel's trumpet sounds, then the saints shall sing ; the bodies of believers shall come out of the grave to be made happy, as the chief butler came out of the prison, and was restored to all his dignity at the court ; but the bodies of the wicked shall come out of the grave, as the chief baker out of prison, to be executed, Gen. xl. 22.

*Use 1.* Believe this doctrine of the resurrection ; and that the same body that dies shall rise again, and with the soul be crowned. Without the belief of this, *tota corrui religio*, "all religion falls to the ground," 1 Cor. xv. 14. ' If the dead rise not, then Christ is not risen, and then our faith is vain.'

*Use 2. Comfort.* The body shall rise again ; this was Job's comfort, Job xix. 26. ' Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.' The body is sensible of joy, as well as the soul ; and indeed we shall not be in all our glory, till the bodies are re-united to our souls. O consider what joy there will be at the re-uniting of the body and the soul at the resurrection ; look what sweet embraces of joy were between old Jacob and Joseph, when they first saw one another, Gen. xlv. 29. such, and infinitely more, will there be, when the body and soul of a saint shall meet together at the resurrection. How will the body and soul greet one another ? what a welcome will the soul give to the body ? O blessed body ! when I prayed, thou didst attend my prayers with hands lifted up, and knees bowed down ; thou wert willing to suffer with me, and now thou shalt reign with me ; thou wert sown in dishonour, but now art raised in glory. O my dear body ! I will enter into thee again, and be eternally married to thee.

*Use 3.* The resurrection of the body is a cordial when a Christian lies a-dying. Thy body, though it drop into the sepulchre, it shall revive and flourish as an herb in the resurrection :



the grave is a bed of dust, where the bodies of saints sleep; but they shall be awakened by the trump of the arch-angel. The grave is your long home, but not your last home: though death strip you of your beauty yet at the resurrection you shall have it restored again. As David, when he found Saul asleep, took away his spear and cruse of water, but when he awoke he restored them again, 1 Sam. xxvi. 22. so, tho' at death all our strength and beauty be taken away, yet at the resurrection God will restore all again in a more glorious manner.

*Qu. 4. But how shall we know that our bodies shall be raised to a glorious resurrection?*

*Ans.* If we have a part in the first resurrection, Rev. xx. 6. 'Blessed is he that hath a part in the first resurrection.' *Qu. What is meant by this?* *Ans.* It is a rising by repentance out of the grave of sin: he who lies buried in sin, can have little hope of a joyful resurrection; his body shall be raised, but not in glory. O then, ask conscience, have you a part in the first resurrection? hath the Spirit entered into you, and lifted you up? hath it raised you out of your unbelief? hath it raised your hearts above the earth? this is the first resurrection; and if your souls are thus spiritually raised, then your bodies shall be gloriously raised; and shall shine as stars in the kingdom of heaven. Regeneration makes way for a glorious resurrection.

*Use.* Seeing you expect your bodies should arise to glory, keep your bodies unspotted from sin. Shall a drunken body rise to glory? shall an unclean body rise to glory? shall a thievish body steal into heaven? O keep your bodies pure: keep your eyes from unchaste glances, your hands from bribes, your tongues from slander: defile not your bodies, which you hope shall rise one day to glory. Your bodies are the members of Christ: and hear what the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xi. 15. 'Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.' O keep your bodies unspotted, let them be instruments of righteousness, 1 Cor. vi. 20. 'Glorify God in your body.' If your bodies glorify God, God will glorify your bodies.

*Qu. 5. But seeing our bodies must be laid in the grave, and they may lie many years a rotting there before the resurrection; what may support and comfort us in this case?*

*Ans.* 1. That God will not leave his people in the grave. Our friends bring us to the grave and leave us there, but God will not; God will go to the grave with us, and watch over our dead bodies, and take care of our ashes, Rizpah watched over the dead bodies of the sons of Saul, and guarded them against the ravenous fowls of the air, 2 Sam. xxi. 10. Thus the Lord watcheth over the dead bodies of the saints, and looks to it, that none of their dust be missing. Christian, thou hast a God to watch over thy body when thou art dead.

2. The bodies of the saints in the grave, though separated from their souls, are united to Christ. The dust of a believer is part of Christ's mystical body.

3. When the bodies of the saints are in the sepulchre, their souls are in paradise; the soul doth not sleep in the body, 'but returns to God that gave it,' Eccl. xii. 7. The soul immediately partakes of those joys the blessed angels do: when the body returns to dust, the soul returns to rest: when the body is sleeping, the soul is triumphing; when the body is buried, the soul is crowned: as the spies were sent before to taste of the fruits of the land, Numb. xiii. so at death the soul is sent before into heaven, to taste of the fruit of the holy land.

4. When God's time is come, the 'graves shall deliver up their dead,' Rev. xx. 13. When the judge sends, the goaler must deliver up his prisoners, as God said to Jacob, Gen. xlv. 4. 'I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will surely bring thee up again.' So the Lord will go down with us into the grave, and will surely bring us up again.

5. Though the bodies of the saints shall rot and be loathsome in the grave, yet afterwards they shall be made illustrious and glorious. Concerning this, consider,

1. The bodies of the saints, when they arise, shall be comely and beautiful. The body of a saint in this life may be deformed: those whose minds are adorned with virtue, yet may have misshapen bodies; as the finest cloth may have the coarsest list; but this deformed body shall be amiable and beautiful. This beauty consists in two things; 1. Perfection of parts. There shall be a full proportion of all the members; in this life there is oft a defect of members; the eye is lost, the arm is cut off; but in the resurrection all parts of the body shall be restored again: therefore the resurrection is called the time of restoring all things, Acts iii. 19. Malchus' ear cut, *restituit*. 2. Clarity and splendor: the bodies of the saints shall have a graceful majesty in them; they shall be like Stephen, whose face shone as if it had been the face of an angel, Acts vi. 15. Nay, they shall be made like Christ's glorious body, Phil. iii. 21.

2. The bodies of the saints, when they arise, shall be free from the necessities of nature, as hunger and thirst, Rev. vii. 16. 'They shall hunger no more.' Moses on the mount was so filled with the glory of God, that he needed not the recruits of nature. Much more in heaven shall the bodies of the saints, so filled with God's glory, be upheld without food.

3. The bodies of the saints, when they arise, shall be swift and nimble. Our bodies on earth are dull and heavy in their motion; then they shall be swift, and made fit to ascend, as the body of Elias, in the air. Now the body is a clog; in heaven it shall be a wing: we shall be as the angels, Mat. xxii. 30.

And how nimble are they? The angel Gabriel in a short time came from heaven to the earth, Dan. ix. 21. As the helm turns the ship instantly whither the steersman will: so the body in an instant will move which way the soul will.

4. The bodies of the saints, at the resurrection, shall be very firm and strong, 1 Cor. xv. 43. 'It is raised in power.' Through frequent labour and sickness, the strongest body begins to languish: but at the resurrection we shall be of a strong constitution; then there will be no weariness in the body, nor faintness in the spirits. This may comfort you who now conflict with many bodily weaknesses. This weak body shall be raised in power; the body, which is now a weak reed, shall be like a rock.

5. The bodies of the saints at the resurrection shall be immortal, 1 Cor. xv. 53. 'This mortal shall put on immortality;' our bodies shall run parallel with eternity, Luke xx. 36. 'Neither can they die any more.' Heaven is an healthful climate, there is no bill of mortality there. If a physician could give you a receipt to keep you from dying, what sums of money would you give? At the resurrection Christ shall give the saints such a receipt, Rev. xxi. 4. 'There shall be no more death.'

II. The second privilege believers shall have at the resurrection, is, They shall be openly acquitted at the day of judgment.

## OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

Qu. XXXVIII. *WHAT benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*

Ans. 1. Their bodies shall be raised up to glory, and shall be openly acquitted at the day of judgment, and crowned with the full and perfect enjoyment of God to all eternity.

2. *They shall be openly acquitted at the day of judgment.* This is to be laid down for a position, that there shall be a day of judgment, 1 Cor. v. 10. 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.' This is the grand assizes; the greatest appearance that ever was: Now Adam shall see all his posterity at once. We must all appear; the greatness of men's persons doth not exempt them from Christ's tribunal: kings and captains are brought in trembling before the Lamb's throne, Rev. vi. 15. We must all appear, and appear in our own persons; not by a proxy.

Q. 1. *How doth it appear that there shall be a day of judgment?*

Ans. Two ways. 1. By the suffrage of scripture, Eccl. xii.



9, 12, 14. 'For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing.' Pſal. xvi. 13. 'For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth.' The reduplication denotes the certainty, Dan. vii. 9. 'I beheld till the thrones were caſt down, and the Ancient of days did ſit, whoſe garment was white as ſnow. The judgment was ſet, and the books were opened.'

2. It appears from the petty ſeſſions kept in a man's own conſcience; when a man doth virtuoſly, conſcience doth excuſe him, when evil conſcience doth arraign and condemn him. Now, what is this private ſeſſion kept in the court of conſcience, but a certain fore-runner of that general day of judgment, when all the world ſhall be ſummoned to God's tribunal?

*Q. Why muſt there be a day of judgment?*

*Anſ.* That there may be a day of retribution, when God may render to every one according to his work. Things ſeem to be carried very unequally in the world: the wicked do ſo proſper, as if they were rewarded for doing evil; and the godly do ſo ſuffer, as if they were puniſhed for being good. Therefore, for the vindicating of God's juſtice, there muſt be a day, wherein there ſhall be a righteous diſtribution of puniſhments and rewards to men, according to their actions.

*Q. 3. Who ſhall be judge?*

*Anſ.* The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, John vi. 22. 'The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.' It is an article in our creed, that, Chriſt ſhall come to judge the quick and the dead. It is a great honour put upon Chriſt; he who was himſelf judged, ſhall now be judge, he who once hung upon the croſs, ſhall ſit upon the bench. Chriſt is fit to be judge, as he partakes both of the manhood and Godhead.

1. Of the manhood: being clothed with the human nature, he may be viſibly ſeen of all. It is requiſite the judge ſhould be ſeen, Rev. i. 7. 'Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye ſhall ſee him.'

2. As he partakes of the Godhead: he is of infinite prudence to underſtand all cauſes brought before him; and of infinite power to execute offenders. He is deſcribed with ſeven eyes, Zech. iii. 9. to denote his prudence; and a rod of iron, Pſal. ii. 9. to denote his power: he is ſo wiſe, that he cannot be deluded; and ſo ſtrong, that he cannot be reſiſted.

*Q. 4. When will the court ſit, when will the time of judgment be?*

*Anſ.* For the *quando*, or the time of the general judgment, it is a ſecret kept from the angels, Mat. xxiv. 36. 'Of that day and hour knows no man, no not the angels of heaven.' But this is ſure, it cannot be far off: one great ſign of the approach of the day of judgment, is, 'That iniquity ſhall abound, Mat. xxiv. ſure then this day is near at hand, for iniquity did

never more abound than in this age, and lust grows hot, and love grows cold. This is certain, when the elect are all converted, then Christ will come to judgment: as he that rows a ferry-boat, stays till all the passengers are taken into his boat, and then he rows away: so Christ stays till all the elect are gathered in, and then he will hasten away to judgment.

Q. 5. *What shall be the modus or manner of trial?*

Ans. 1. The citing of men to the court. The dead are cited as well as the living. Men, when they die, avoid the censure of our law-courts; but at the last day, the dead are cited to God's tribunal, Rev. xx. 12. 'I saw the dead small and great stand before God.' This citing of men will be by the sound of a trumpet, 1 Thess. iv. 26. And this trumpet will sound so loud, that it will raise men out of their graves, Mat. xxiv. 31. Such as will not hear the trumpet of the gospel sound in their ears *repent and believe*, shall hear the trumpet of the archangel sounding, *arise and be judged*.

2. The approach of the judge to the bench.

*First*, This will be terrible to the wicked. How can a guilty prisoner endure the sight of the judge? If Felix trembled when Paul preached of judgment, Acts xxiv. 25. how will sinners tremble when they shall see Christ come to judgment? Christ is described (sitting in judgment) with a fiery stream issuing from him, Dan. vii. 10. Now the Lamb of God will be turned into a lion; the sight of Christ will strike terror into sinners. As when Joseph said to his brethren, 'I am Joseph whom ye sold into Egypt, they were troubled at his presence,' Gen. xlv. 4. Now how did their hearts smite them for their sin! so, when Christ shall come to judgment, and say, 'I am Jesus whom ye sinned against, I am Jesus whose laws ye have broken, whose blood ye despised; I am now come to judge you:' O what horror and amazement will take hold of sinners! they will be troubled at the presence of their judge.

*Secondly*, The approach of Christ to the bench of judicature will be comfortable to the righteous. (1.) Christ will come in splendor and great glory. His first coming in the flesh was obscure, Isa. liii. 2. He was like a prince in disguise: but his second coming will be illustrious, 'he shall come in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels,' Mark vii. 38. O what a bright day will that be, when such a number of angels, those morning stars, shall appear in the air, and Christ the Sun of righteousness shall shine in splendor above the brightest cherub? (2.) Christ will come as a friend. Indeed, if the saints' judge with their enemy, they might fear condemning: but he who loves them, and prayed for them, is their judge: he who is their husband is their judge, therefore they need not fear but all things shall go well on their side.

*Thirdly*, The trial itself, which hath a dark and a light side. (1.) A dark side. It will fall heavy on the wicked: the judge being set, the books are opened, Rev. xx. 12. the book of conscience, and the book of God's remembrance; and now the sinner's charge being read, and all their sins laid open, their murder, drunkenness, uncleanness, Christ will say, sinners, what can you plead for yourselves, that the sentence of death should not pass? The wicked being convicted will be speechless. Then follows that dismal sentence, Mat. xxv. 41. *Ite maledicti*, 'depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' He that said to God, 'depart from me;' Job xxi. 14. and to religion, *depart from me*; must now hear that word pronounced from his judge, *depart from me*; a dreadful sentence, but righteous, Psal. li. 4. The sinner himself shall cry, guilty: though the wicked have a sea of wrath, yet not one drop of injustice. And when once the sentence is past, it is irreversibile, there is no appealing to an higher court. (2.) The trial hath a light side: it will be for increasing the joy and happiness of the righteous. The day of judgment will be a day of jubilee to them.

I. At that day Christ their judge will own them by name. Those whom the world scorned, and looked upon as precisians and fools, Christ will take by the hand, and openly acknowledge them to be his favourites. What is Christ's 'confessing of men,' Luke xii. 8. but his openly acknowledging them to be precious in his eyes?

II. Christ as judge will plead for them. It is not usual to be both judge and advocate, to sit on the bench and plead; but it shall be so at the day of judgment.

*First*, Christ will plead his own blood for the saints. *These persons I have paid a price for, they are the travail of my soul, they have sinned, but my soul was made an offering for their sin.*

*Secondly*, Christ will vindicate them from all unjust censures. Here they were strangely misrepresented to the world, as proud, hypocritical, factious; Paul was called a seditious man, the head of a faction, Acts xxiv. 5. But at the day of judgment Christ will clear the saints' innocency, then he will 'bring forth their righteousness as the light.' Psal. xxxvii. 6. As he will wipe off tears from their eyes, so dust from their name. Moses, when he was charged with ambition, that he took too much upon him, comforted himself with this, 'To-morrow will the Lord shew who are his,' Numb. xvi. 5. So may the saints, when reproached, comfort themselves with the day of judgment; then will Christ say who are his; then shall the saints come forth as the wings of a dove covered with silver.

*Thirdly*, Christ as judge will absolve them before men and



angels, as Pilate said of Christ, 'I find no fault in this man,' John xviii. 38. So will Christ say of the elect, I find no fault in them, I pronounce them righteous. Then follows, 'come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom.' Mat. xxv. 34. As if Christ should say, *O ye happy ones, the delight of my soul, the fruit of my sufferings, stand no longer at the bar. Ye are heirs apparent of the crown of heaven, enter and take possession.* At the hearing of this sentence, with what ravishing joy will the saints be filled? This word, *Come, ye blessed,* will be music to their ear, and a cordial to their heart.

*Fourthly,* Christ will mention before men and angels all the good deeds the saints have done. Mat. xxv. 35. 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink.' You that have wept in secret for sin, that have shewn any love to Christ's name, that have been rich in good works, Christ will take notice of it at the last day, and say, 'well done, good and faithful servants.' He himself will be the herald to proclaim your praises; thus it shall be done to the man whom Christ delights to honour.

*Fifthly,* Christ will call his saints from the bar, to sit upon the bench with him to judge the world, Jude 14. 'Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all.' 1 Cor. vi. 2. 'Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?' The saints shall sit with Christ in judicature, as justices of peace with the judge: they shall applaud Christ's righteous sentence on the wicked, and, as it were, vote with Christ. This, as it is a great honour to the saints, so it must needs add to the sorrows of the wicked, to see those whom they once hated and derided, sit as judges upon them.

*Sixthly,* The saints shall be fully crowned with the enjoyment of God for ever. They shall be in his sweet presence, 'in whose presence is fulness of joy,' Psal. xvi. 11. and this shall be for ever: the banner of God's love shall be eternally displayed: the joys of heaven are without intermission and expiration, 1 Thess. iv. 17. 'And so shall we be ever with the Lord.'

*Use.* As it is sad news to the wicked, they shall 'not stand in judgment,' Pf. i. 5. They shall come to judgment, but they shall not stand in judgment, viz. they shall not stand acquitted, they shall not stand with boldness, but sneak and hang down their head, and not be able to look their judge in the face: so it is great consolation to the godly. When the apostle had said, 'The Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God;' he presently adds, 'Wherefore comfort one another with these words,' 1 Thess. iv. 16, 18.

1. The day of judgment is comfort, in respect of weakness of grace. A Christian is ready to be troubled, to see his grace

so minute and imperfect; but, at the last day, if Christ find but a drachm of true grace, it shall be accepted. If thine be true gold, though it be many grains too light, Christ will put his merits into the scales, and make it pass current.

2. It is a comfort to such of the saints who have met with unrighteous judgment in the world, who have been wronged of their estates in law suits, or had their lives taken away by an unrighteous sentence; Christ will judge over things again, and will give a righteous sentence. If your estates have been taken away wrongfully, you shall be restored a thousand-fold at the day of judgment. If you have lost your lives for Christ, yet you shall not lose your crown; you shall wear a garland made of the flowers of paradise, which fade not away.

*Branch I.* Meditate much upon the day of judgment. Feathers swim upon the water, but gold sinks into it: light feathery Christians float in vanity, they mind not the day of judgment; but serious spirits sink deep into the thoughts of it.

2. The meditation of this last day would make us very sincere. We would then labour to approve our hearts to God, the great judge and umpire of the world. It is easy to carry it fair before men, but there is no dissembling or prevaricating with God; he sees what the heart is, and will accordingly pass his verdict.

2. The meditation of Christ's coming to judge us, would keep us from judging our brethren. We are apt to judge others as to their final state; which is for men to step into Christ's place, and take his work out of his hand, James iv. 12. 'Who art thou that judgest another?' Thou that passest a rash sentence upon another, thou must come thyself shortly to be judged, and then perhaps he may be acquitted, and thou condemned.

*Branch II.* So demean and carry yourselves, that at the day of judgment you may be sure to be acquitted, and have those glorious privileges the saints shall be crowned with.

*Q. How is that?*

*Ans.* 1. If you would stand acquitted at the day of judgment, then, 1<sup>st</sup>, Labour to get into Christ, Phil. iii. 9. 'That I may be found in him.' Faith implants us into Christ, it ingarrisons us in him, and then 'there is no condemnation,' Rom. viii. 1. 'There is no standing before Christ, but by being in Christ. 2<sup>dly</sup>, Labour for humility. It is a kind of self-annihilation, 2 Cor. xii. 11. 'Though I be nothing.' Christian, hast thou parts and abilities, and dost thou cover them with the vail of humility? as Moses, when his face shone, put a vail over it. If thou art humble, thou shalt be acquitted at the day of judgment, Job xxii. 29. 'He shall save the humble person.' An

humble man judgeth himself for his sins, and Christ will acquit them who judge themselves.

2. If you would stand acquitted at the last day, then keep a clear conscience. Do not load yourselves with guilt, and furnish your judge with matter against you. 'The Lord, saith Paul hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world,' Acts xvii. 21. And how would Paul fit himself for that day? Acts xxvi. 16. 'Herein I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence, towards God and towards man.' Be careful of the first and second table, be holy and just. Have hearts without false aims, and hands without false weights. Keep conscience as clear as your eye, that no dust of sin fall into it: they that sin against conscience, will be shy of their judge: such as take in prohibited goods, cannot endure to see the searchers that are appointed to open their packs. Christian, thy pack will be opened at the last day, I mean thy conscience; and Christ is the searcher, to see what sins, what prohibited goods thou hast taken in; and then he proceeds to judgment. O! be sure to keep a good conscience; this is the best way to stand with boldness at the day of judgment. The voice of conscience is the voice of God: if conscience doth, upon just grounds, acquit us, God will acquit us, 1 John iii. 21. 'If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.'

3. If you would stand acquitted at the last day, then trade your talents for God's glory; lay out yourselves for God, honour him with your substance: relieve Christ's members; this is the way to be acquitted. He that had five talents traded with them, and made them five talents more; 'his lord said unto him, well done good and faithful servant, Mat. xxv. 21.

4. If you would stand acquitted at the day of judgment, get an entire love to the saints, 1 John iii. 14. 'We know we are passed from death to life,' &c. Love is the truest touch-stone of sincerity. To love grace for grace, shews the spirit of God to be in a man. Doth conscience witness for you? Are you perfumed with this sweet spice of love? Do you delight most in those in whom the image of God shines? Do you reverence their graces? Do you bear with their infirmities? A blessed evidence that you shall be acquitted in the day of judgment. 'We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.'



## OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S REVEALED WILL.

DEUT. xxvii. 9, 10. *Take heed and hearken, O Israel, this day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God ; thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do his commandments.*

Q. XXXIX. *WHAT is the duty that God requireth of man ?*

*Ans.* Obedience to his revealed will.

It is not enough to hear God's voice, but we must obey. Obedience is a part of that honour we owe to God, Mal. i. 6. 'If I be a Father, where is my honour?' Obedience carries in it the life-blood of religion. 'Obey the voice of the Lord God, and do his commandments.' Obedience without knowledge is blind, and knowledge without obedience is lame. Rachel was fair to look upon ; but, being barren, said, 'Give me children, or I die :' so, if knowledge doth not bring forth the child of obedience, it will die, 1 Sam. xv. 22. 'To obey is better than sacrifice.' Saul thought it was enough for him to offer sacrifices, though he disobeyed God's command : no, 'to obey is better than sacrifice.' God disclaims sacrifice, if obedience be wanting, Jer. vii. 22. 'I spake not to your fathers concerning burnt-offerings, but this thing commanded I them, saying, obey my voice.' Not but that God did enjoin those religious rites of worship ; but the meaning is, God looked chiefly at obedience ; without which, sacrifice was but devout folly. The end why God hath given us his laws, is obedience, Lev. xviii. 4. 'Ye shall do my judgments, and keep my ordinances.' What doth a king publish an edict but that it may be observed ;

Q. 1. *What is the rule of obedience ?*

*Ans.* The written word, that is, proper obedience which the word requires ; our obedience must correspond with the word, as the copy with the original. To seem to be zealous, if it be not according to the word, is not obedience, but will-worship, Popish traditions, which have no footing in the word, are abominable ; and God will say, *Quis quesivet hæc ?* Who hath required this at your hand ? Isa. i. 12. The apostle condemns the worshipping of angels, which had a shew of humility, Col. ii. 18. The Jews might say they were loth to be so bold as to go to God in their own persons, they would be more humble, and prostrate themselves before the angels, and desire them to present their petitions to God ; this shew of humility was hateful to God, because there was no word to warrant it.

Q. 2. *What are the right ingredients in our obedience to make it acceptable? how must it be qualified?*

Ans. 1. Obedience must be *cum animi prolebio*, free and cheerful, else it is penance, not sacrifice, Isa. i. 19. 'If ye be willing and obedient.' Tho' we serve God with weakness, let it be with willingness. You love to see your servants go cheerfully about your work. Under the law, God would have a free-will offering, Deut. xvi. 10. Hypocrites obey God grudgingly, and against their will; they do *facere bonum*, but not *velle*. Cain brought his sacrifice, but not his heart. 'Tis a true rule, *Quicquid cor non facit, non fit*: what the heart doth not, is not done. Willingness is the soul of obedience; God sometimes accepts of willingness without the work, but never of the work without willingness. Cheerfulness shews that there is love in the duty; and love doth to our services, as the sun doth to the fruit, mellow and ripen them, and make them come off with a better relish.

2. Obedience must be devout and fervent, Rom. xii. 11. 'Fervent in spirit,' &c. *Quæ ebullit præ ardore*; it alludes to water that boils over: so the heart must boil over with hot affections in the service of God. The glorious angels, who, for their burning in fervour and devotion, are called Seraphims; these God chuseth to serve him in heaven. The snail under the law was unclean, because a dull slothful creature: obedience without fervency, is like a sacrifice without fire. Why should not our obedience be lively and fervent? God deserves the flower and strength of our affections. Domitian would not have his statue carved in wood or iron, but in gold; lively affections make golden services. It is fervency makes obedience acceptable; Elijah was fervent in spirit, and his prayer opened and shut heaven: and again he prayed, and fire fell on his enemies, 2 Kings i. 10. Elijah's prayer fetched fire from heaven, because, being fervent, it carried fire up to heaven: *quicquid decorum ex fide proficitur*. Aug.

3. Obedience must be extensive, it must reach to all God's commands, Psal. cxix. 6. 'Then shall I not be ashamed, (or, as it is in the Hebrew, *lo Eho'sh*, blush) when I have respect to all thy commandments. *Quicquid propter Deum fit equaliter fit*. There is a stamp of divine authority upon all God's commands; and, if I obey one precept because God commands, I must obey all: true obedience runs through all duties of religion, as the blood through all the veins, or the sun through all the signs of the zodiac. A good Christian makes gospel-piety and moral equity kiss each other. Herein some discover their hypocrisy, they will obey God in some things which are more facile, and may raise their repute; but other things they leave undone, Mark x. 21. 'One thing is lacking,' *unum deest*.

Herod would hear John Baptist, but not leave his incest: some will pray, but not give alms; others will give alms, but not pray, Mat. xxiii. 23. 'Ye pay tithes of mint and anise, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith.' The badger hath one foot shorter than the other: so these are shorter in some duties than in others. God likes not such partial servants, that will do some part of the work he sets them about, and leave the other undone.

4. Obedience must be sincere, viz. We must aim at the glory of God in it. *Finis specificat actionem*; in religion the end is all. The end of our obedience must not be to stop the mouth of conscience, or to gain applause or preferment; but that we may grow more like God, and bring more glory to God, 1 Cor. x. 31. 'Do all to the glory of God.' That which hath spoiled many glorious actions, and made them lose their reward, is, when men's aims have been wrong: the Pharisees gave alms, but blew a trumpet, that they might have glory of men, Mat. vi. 2. alms should shine, but not blaze. Jehu did well in destroying the Baal-worshippers, and God commended him for it; but, because his aims were not good (he aimed at settling himself in the kingdom) therefore God looked upon it as no better than murder, Hos. i. 4. 'I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.' O let us look to our ends in obedience; it is possible the action may be right, and not the heart, 2 Chron. xxv. 2. 'Amaziah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.' Two things are chiefly to be eyed in obedience, the principle, and the end: a child of God though he shoots short in his obedience, yet he takes a right aim.

5. Obedience must be in and through Christ, Eph. i. 6. 'He hath accepted us in the beloved.' Not our obedience, but Christ's merits, procure acceptance: we must, in every part of worship tender up Christ to God in the arms of our faith: unless we serve God thus, in hope and confidence of Christ's merits, we do rather provoke God, than please him. As, when king Uzziah would offer incense without a priest, God was angry with him, and struck him with leprosy, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16. so when we do not come to God in and through Christ, we offer up incense to God without a priest; and what can we expect but severe rebukes?

6. Obedience must be constant, Psal. cvi. 3. 'Blessed is he who doth righteousness at all times.' True obedience is not like an high colour in a fit, but it is a right sanguine; it is like the fire on the altar, which was always kept burning, Lev. vi. 13. Hypocrites' obedience is but for a season; it is like plaiting work, which is soon washed off: but true obedience is constant: tho' we meet with affliction, we must go on in our



obedience, Job xvii. 9. 'The righteous shall hold on his way.' We have vowed constancy; we have vowed to renounce the pomp and vanities of the world, and to fight under Christ's banner to death. When a servant hath entered into covenant with his master, and the indentures are sealed, then he cannot go back, he must serve out his time: there are indentures drawn in baptism, and in the Lord's supper the indentures are renewed and sealed on our part, that we will be faithful and constant in our obedience; therefore we must imitate Christ, who became obedient to the death, Phil. ii. 8. The crown is set upon the head of perseverance, Rev. ii. 26. 'He that keeps my words unto the end, to him will I give the morning-star.'

*Use 1.* This indicts such who live in a contradiction to this text: they have cast off the yoke of obedience, Jer. xlv. 16. 'As for the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee.' God bids men pray in their family, they live in the total neglect of it: he bids them sanctify the sabbath, they follow their pleasures on that day: God bids them abstain from the appearance of sin, they do not abstain from the act; they live in the act of revenge, in the act of uncleanness. This is an high contempt of God; it is rebellion, and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

*Q. Whence is it that men do not obey God? They know their duty, yet do it not?*

*Ans. 1.* The not obeying of God is for want of faith, Isa. liii. 1. *Quis credidet?* 'Who hath believed our report?' Did men believe sin were so bitter, that hell followed at the heels of it, would they go on in sin? Did they believe there were such a reward for the righteous, that godliness were gain, would they not pursue it? but they are atheists, not fully captivated into the belief of these things; hence it is they obey not. This is Satan's master-piece, his draw-net by which he drags millions to hell, by keeping them in infidelity; he knows, if he can but keep them from believing the truth, he is sure to keep them from obeying it.

2. The not obeying God is for want of self-denial. God commands one thing, and men's lusts command another; and they will rather die than deny their lusts: now, if lust cannot be denied God cannot be obeyed.

*Use 2.* Obey God's voice. This is the beauty of a Christian.

*Q. What are the great arguments or incentives to obedience?*

*Ans. 1.* Obedience makes us precious to God; we shall be his favourites, Exod. xix. 5. 'If ye will obey my voice, ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people:' you shall be my portion, my jewels, the apple of mine eye, 'I will give kingdoms for your ransom.' Isa. xliii. 3.

2. There is nothing lost by obedience. To obey God's will

is the way to have our will. (1.) Would we have a blessing in our estates, let us obey, Deut. xxviii. 1, 3. 'If thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord, to do all his commandments, blessed shalt thou be in the field: blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.' To obey, is the best way to thrive in our estates. (2.) Would we have a blessing in our souls, let us obey, Jer. vii. 23. 'Obey, and I will be your God.' My Spirit shall be your guide, sanctifier, and comforter, Heb. v. 9. 'Christ became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.' While we please God, we please ourselves; while we give him the duty, he gives us the dowry. We are apt to say, as Amaziah, 2 Chron. xxv. 9. 'What shall we do for the hundred talents?' You see you lose nothing by obeying; the obedient son hath the inheritance settled on him. Obey, and you shall have a kingdom, Luke xii. 32. 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.'

3. What a sin disobedience is; *1<sup>st</sup>*, It is an irrational sin. (1.) We are not able to stand it out in defiance against God, 1 Cor. x. 22. 'Are we stronger than he?' will the sinner go to measure arms with God? he is the Father Almighty, who can command legions: if we have no strength to resist him, it is irrational to disobey him. 2. It is irrational; as it is against all law and equity: we have our daily subsistence from God; in him we live and move: is it not equal, that as we live by him, we should live to him? that as God gives us our allowance, so we should give him our allegiance?

*2dly*, It is a destructive sin, 2 Theff. i. 7, 8. 'The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that obey not the gospel.' He who refuseth to obey God's will in commanding, shall be sure to obey his will in punishing. The sinner, while he thinks to slip the knot of obedience twists the cord of his own damnation; he perisheth without excuse; he hath no plea or apology to make for himself, Luke xii. 47. 'The servant which knew his lord's will, but did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.' God will say why did you not obey? you know how to do good, but did it not; therefore your blood is upon your own head.

*Q. What means shall we use that we may obey?*

*Ans.* 1. *Serious consideration.* Consider, God's commands are not grievous: he commands nothing unreasonable, 1 John v. 3. It is easier to obey the commands of God than sin: the commands of sin are burthensome; let a man be under the power of any lust, how doth he tire himself? what hazards doth he run, even to the endangering his health and soul, that he may satisfy his lusts? what tedious journies did Antiochus Epiphanes take in persecuting the Jews? Jer. ix. 5. 'They weary

themselves to commit iniquity :’ and are not God’s commands more easy to obey ? Chrysostom saith, virtue is easier than vice ; temperance is less burdensome than drunkenness. Some have gone with less pains to heaven, than others have to hell.

*Consideration 2.* God commands nothing but what is beneficial, Deut. x. 12, 13. ‘ O Israel, what doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and to keep his statutes, which I command thee this day, for thy good ?’ To obey God, is not so much our duty as our privilege : his commands carry meat in the mouth of them. He bids us repent ; and why ? that our sins may be blotted out, Acts ii. 19. He commands us to believe ; and why ? that we may be saved, Acts xvi. 31. There is love in every command : as if a king should bid one of his subjects dig in a gold mine, then take the gold to himself.

2. *Earnest supplication.* Implore the help of the Spirit to carry us on in obedience : God’s Spirit makes obedience easy and delightful. If the load-stone draw the iron, now it is not hard for the iron to move : If God’s Spirit quicken and draw the heart, now it is not hard to obey. When a gale of the Spirit blows, now we go full sail in obedience. Turn that promise into a prayer, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. ‘ I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.’ The promise encourageth us, the Spirit enables us to obedience.

## OF LOVE.

THE rule of obedience being the moral law, comprehended in the Ten Commandments, the next question is,

Qu. XLII. *What is the sum of the Ten Commandments ?*

*Ans.* The sum of the Ten Commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and our neighbour as ourselves.

Deut. vi. 5. ‘ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.’ The duty called for, is love, yea, the strength of love, ‘ with all thy heart.’ God will lose none of our love. Love is the soul of religion, and that which goes to the right constituting a Christian : love is the queen of the graces ; it shines and sparkles in God’s eye, as the precious stones did on the breast-plate of Aaron.

Qu. 1. *What is love ?*

*Ans.* It is an holy fire kindled in the affections, whereby a Christian is carried out strongly after God as the supreme God.



Q. 2. *What is the antecedent of love to God?*

*Ans.* The antecedent of love is knowledge: the Spirit shines upon the understanding, and discovers these orient beauties in God, his wisdom, holiness, mercy; and these are the *lenocinium*, the load-stone to entice and draw the love to God. *Ignoti nulla cupido*: such as know not God cannot love him; if the sun be set in the understanding, there must needs be night in the affections.

Qu. 3. *Wherein doth the formal nature of love consist?*

*Ans.* The nature of love is in delighting in the objects: *Complacentia amantis in amato*, Aquin. This is our loving God, our taking delight in him, Ps. lxxiii. 4. 'Delight thyself in the Lord;' as a bride delights herself in her jewels. Grace changeth a Christian's aims and delights.

Qu. 4. *How must our love to God be qualified?*

*Ans.* 1. If it be a sincere love, we must love God with all our heart: in the text, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God [Heb. *Becol leuauca*] with all thy heart.' God will have the whole heart; we must not divide our love between God and sin: the true mother would not have the child divided, nor will God have the heart divided; it must be the whole heart.

2. We must love God *propter se*, for himself, for his own intrinsic excellencies: we must love him for his loveliness: *Meretricius est amor plus annulum quam sponsum amare*; "It is an harlot's love, to love the portion more than the person." Hypocrites love God because he gives them corn and wine: we must love God for himself; for those shining perfections which are in him. Gold is loved for itself.

3. We must love God with all our might; in the Hebrew text, our vehemency; we must love God, *quoad posse*, as much as we are able. Christians should be like Seraphims burning in holy love: we can never love God so much as he deserves; the angels in heaven cannot love God so much as he deserves.

4. Love to God must be active in its sphere: love is an industrious affection, it sets the head a studying for God, hands a working, feet a-running in the ways of his commandments; it is called the labour of love, 1 Thess. i. 3. Mary Magdalene loved Christ, and poured her ointments on him. We think we never do enough for the person whom we love.

5. Love to God must be superlative. God is the quintessence of beauty, a whole paradise of delight; and he must have a priority in our love. Our love to God must be above all things besides, as the oil swims above the water: we must love God above estate, relations. Great is the love to relations: there is a story in the French Academy, of a daughter, who, when her father was condemned to die by a famine, gave him suck with her own breasts. But our love to God must be above father and

mother, Matth. x. 37. We may give the creature the milk of our love, God must have the cream; the spouse keeps the juice of her pomegranates for Christ, Cant. viii. 2.

6. Our love to God must be constant, like the fire the Vestal virgins kept in Rome, which did not go out: love must be like the motion of the pulse, it beats as long as there is life, Cant. viii. 7. 'Many waters cannot quench love,' not the waters of persecution, Eph. iii. 17. 'Rooted in love.' A branch withers that doth not grow on a root; that love may not die, it must be well rooted.

Qu. 5. *What are the visible signs of our love to God?*

Ans. 1. If we love God, then our desire is after him, Isa. xxvi. 8. 'The desire of our soul is to thy name.' He who loves God, breathes after communion with him, Psal. xlii. 2. My soul thirsts for the living God.' Persons in love desire to be often conferring together; he who loves God, desires to be much in his presence; he loves the ordinances, they are the glass where the glory of God is resplendent; in the ordinances we meet with him whom our soul loves, we have God's smiles and whispers, and some foretastes of heaven. Such as have no desire after ordinances, have no love to God.

2. The second visible sign: he who loves God, cannot take contentment in any thing without him. An hypocrite who pretends to love God, give him but corn and wine, and he can be content without God: but a soul fired with love to God, cannot be without him: lovers faint away, if they have not a sight of the object loved. A gracious soul can want health, but not want God, who is the health of his countenance, Ps. xliii. 5. If God should say to a soul that entirely loves him, take thy ease, swim in pleasure, solace thyself in the delights of the world, but thou shalt not enjoy my presence; this would not content the soul. Nay, if God should say, I will let thee be taken up to heaven, but I will retire into a withdrawing-room, and thou shalt not see my face; this would not content the soul, it is an hell to want God. The philosopher saith, there can be no gold without the influence of the sun: there can be no golden joy in the soul without God's sweet presence and influence.

3. The third visible sign: he who loves God, hates that which would separate between him and God, and that is sin. Sin makes God hide his face; it is like an incendiary, which parts chief friends: therefore the keenness of a Christian's hatred is set against sin, Ps. cxix. 128. 'I hate every false way.' Antipathies can never be reconciled: one cannot love health, but he must hate poison; so we cannot love God but we must hate sin, which would destroy our communion with him.

4. The fourth visible sign is sympathy; friends that love, do grieve for the evils which befall each other. Homer describing

Agamemnon's grief, when he was forced to sacrifice his daughter, brings in all his friends weeping with him, and accompanying him to the sacrifice in mourning: lovers grieve together; if we have true love in our heart to God, we cannot but grieve for those things which grieve him: we shall lay to heart his dishonours; the luxury, drunkenness, contempt of God and religion, Psal. cxix. 136. 'Rivers of tears run down mine eyes,' &c. Some speak of sins of others, and make a laughing at them; sure they have no love to God, who can laugh at that which grieves his Spirit. Doth he love his father, who can laugh to hear him reproached?

5. The fifth visible sign: he who loves God, labours to render him lovely to others; he not only admires God; but speaks in his praises, that he may allure and draw others to be in love with God. She that is in love will commend her lover: the love-sick spouse extols Christ, she makes a panegyric oration of his worth, that she might persuade others to be in love with him, Cant. v. 11. 'His head is as the most fine gold.' True love to God cannot be silent, it will be elegant in setting forth God's renown: no better sign of loving God, than by making him appear lovely, and so drawing profelytes to him.

The sixth visible sign: he who loves God, weeps bitterly for his absence. Mary comes weeping, 'They have taken away my Lord,' John xx. 2. One cries, my health is gone; another, my estate is gone; but he who is a lover of God, cries out, my God is gone, I cannot enjoy him whom I love. What can all worldly comforts do, when once God is absent? It is like a funeral banquet, where there is much meet but no cheer, Job xxx. 28. 'I went mourning without the fun.' If Rachel mourned so for the loss of her children, what vail or pencil can shadow out the sorrow of that Christian who hath lost God's sweet presence? such a soul pours forth floods of tears, and, while it is lamenting, seems to say thus to God, Lord, thou art in heaven, hearing the melodious songs and triumphs of angels; but I sit here in the valley of tears, weeping because thou art gone. O when wilt thou come to me, and revive me with the light of thy countenance? Or, Lord, if thou wilt not come to me, let me come to thee, where I shall have a perpetual smile of thy face in heaven, and shall never more complain, *My beloved hath withdrawn himself.*

7. The seventh visible sign: he who loves God, is willing to do and suffer for him. He subscribes to God's commands; he submits to his will. *First*, He subscribes to God's commands: if God bids him mortify sin, love his enemies, be crucified to the world; he obeys. It is a vain thing for a man to say he loves God, and flights his commands. *Secondly*, He submits to God's will: if God will have him suffer for him, he doth not



dispute, but obey, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. 'Love endureth all things.' Love made Christ suffer for us, and love will make us suffer for him. It is true, every Christian is not a martyr, but he hath a spirit of martyrdom in him; he hath a disposition of mind to suffer, if God call him to it, 2 Tim. iv. 6. 'I am ready to be offered up:' not only the sufferings were ready for Paul, but he was ready for the sufferings. Origen choosed rather to live despised in Alexandria, than with Plotinus to deny the faith, and be great in the prince's favour, Rev. xii. 11. Many say they love God but will not suffer the loss of any thing for him. If Christ should have said to us, I love you well, you are dear to me, but I cannot suffer for you, I cannot lay down my life for you; we should have questioned his love very much: and may not the Lord question ours, when we pretend love to him, but will endure nothing for his sake?

*Use 1.* What shall we say to them who have not a drachm of love in their hearts to God? they have their life from him, yet do not love him. God spreads their table every day, yet they do not love him: sinners dread God as a judge, but do not love him as a father. All the strength in the angels cannot make the heart love God; judgments will not do it; only omnipotent grace, can make a stony heart melt in love. How sad is it to be void of love to God? when the body is cold, and hath no heat in it, it is a sign of death: he is spiritually dead, who hath no heat of love in his heart to God. Shall such live with God, that doth not love him? will God lay an enemy in his bosom? Such as will not be drawn with cords of love, shall be bound in chains of darkness.

*Use 2.* Let us be persuaded to love God with all our heart and might: O let us take our love off from other things, and place it upon God. Love is the heart of religion, the fat of the offering: it is the grace which Christ enquires most after, John xxi. 15. 'Peter, lovest thou me?' Love makes all our services acceptable, it is the musk that perfumes them. It is not so much duty, as love to duty, God delights in; therefore serving and loving God are put together, Isa. lvi. 6. It is better to love him, than to serve him; obedience without love, is like wine without the spirit. O then, be persuaded to love God with all your heart and might. To persuade to this virgin affection of love.

1. It is nothing but your love God desires. The Lord might have demanded your children to be offered in sacrifice: he might have bid you cut and lance yourselves, or lain in hell a while; but he only desires your love, he would only have this flower. Is this an hard request, to love God? was ever any debt easier paid than this? is it any labour for the wife to love her husband? love is delightful. *Non potest amor esse, et dulcis non esse*, Bern.

What is there in our love, that God should desire it? Why should a king desire the love of a woman that is in debt and diseased? God doth not want our love. There are angels enough in heaven to adore and love him. What is God the better for our love? It adds not the least cubit to his essential blessedness. God doth not need our love, yet seeks it. Why doth God desire us to give him our heart? Prov. xxiii. 26. Not that he needs our heart, but that he may make it better.

2. Great will be our advantage, if we love God. God doth not court our love, that we should lose it, 1 Cor. ii. 6. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' If you will love God, you shall have such a reward as exceeds your faith. God will betrothe you to himself in the dearest love, Hos. ii. 19. 'I will betrothe thee unto me for ever, in loving-kindness and mercies,' Zeph. iii. 17. 'The Lord thy God will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love.' If you love God, he will interest you in all his riches and dignities, he will give you heaven and earth for your dowry, he will set a crown on your head. Vespasian the emperor, gave a great reward to a woman who came to him, and professed she loved him; God gives a crown of life to them that love him, James i. 12.

3. Love is the only grace that shall live with us in heaven. In heaven we shall need no repentance, because we have no sin; no faith, because we shall see God face to face: but love to God shall abide for ever. 'Love never faileth,' 1 Cor. xiii. 8. How should we nourish this grace, which shall outlive all the graces, and run parallel with eternity!

4. Our love to God is a sign of his love to us, 1 John iv. 19. 'We love him, because he first loved us.' By nature we have no love to God; we have hearts of stone, Ezek. xxxvi. 1. And how can any love be in hearts of stone? Our loving him is from his loving us. If the glass burn, it is because the sun hath shined on it, else it could not burn: if our hearts burn in love, it is a sign the Sun of righteousness hath shined upon us.

*Q. How shall we do, to love God aright?*

*Ans.* 1. Wait on the preaching of the word. As faith comes by hearing, so doth love: the word sets forth God, in his incomparable excellencies; it doth decypher and pencil him out in all his glory, and a sight of his beauty inflames love.

2. Beg of God, that he will give you a heart to love him. When king Solomon asked wisdom of God, the speech pleased the Lord, 1 Kings iii. 10. So, when thou criest to God, *Lord, give me a heart to love thee, it is my grief I can love thee no more*: sure this prayer pleaseth the Lord, and he will pour out his Spirit upon thee, whose golden oil will make the lamp of thy love burn bright.

3. You who have love to God, keep it flaming upon the altar of your heart. Love, as fire, will be ready to go out, Rev. ii. 4. 'Thou hast left thy first love.' Through neglect of duty, or too much love of the world, our love to God will cool. O preserve your love to God: as you would be careful to preserve the natural heat in your body, so be careful to preserve the heat of love to God. Love is like oil to the wheels, it quickens us in God's service. When you find your love abate and cool, use all means for quickening: when the fire is going out, you throw on fuel: when the flame of love is going out, make use of the ordinances as sacred fuel to keep the fire of your love burning.

## OF THE PREFACE TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Exod. xx. 1, 2. *And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, &c.*

Qu. XLII. *WHAT is the preface to the Ten Commandments?*

Ans. The preface to the Ten Commandments is, 'I am the Lord thy God.'

Where observe, 1. The preface to the preface, 'God spake all these words, saying,' 2. The preface itself to the commandments, 'I am the Lord thy God.'

I begin with the first, the preface to the preface, 'God spake all these words, saying,' &c. This is like the sounding of a trumpet before a solemn proclamation, [God spake] other parts of the Bible are said to be uttered by the mouth of the holy prophets, Luke i. 70. but here God spake in his own person.

Q. *How may we understand this [God spake] he hath no bodily parts or organs of speech?*

Ans. God made some intelligible sound, or formed a voice in the air, which was to the Jews as God's very speaking to them. In the text, 1. The lawgiver, God, [God spake.] 2. The law itself, [all these words.]

1. The lawgiver, [God spake.] There are two things requisite in a lawgiver. *First*, Wisdom. Laws are founded upon reason; and he must be wise that makes laws. God, in this respect, is most fit to be a lawgiver; 'he is wise in heart,' Job ix. 4. he hath a monopoly of wisdom, 1 Tim. i. 17. 'The only wise God.' Therefore he is the fittest to enact and constitute laws. *Secondly*, The second thing requisite in a lawgiver



is, authority. If a subject make laws, though never so wise, yet they want the stamp of authority. God hath the supreme power in his hand ; he derives a being to all ; and he who gives men their lives, hath most right to give them their laws.

2. The law itself [*all these words* :] that is, all the words of the moral law, which is usually styled the decalogue or ten commandments. It is called the moral law, because it is the rule of life and manners. St. Chrysostom compares the scripture to a garden, the moral law is a chief flower in it ; the scripture is a banquet, the moral law the chief dish in it.

(1.) The moral law is perfect. Psal. xix. 7. ‘ The law of the Lord is perfect.’ It is an exact model and platform of religion ; it is the standard of truth, the judge of controversies, the pole star to direct us to heaven, Prov. vi. 23. ‘ The commandment is a lamp.’ Though the moral law be not a Christ to justify us, yet it is a rule to instruct us.

(2.) The moral law is unalterable ; it remains still in force. Though the ceremonial and judicial law are abrogated, yet the moral law delivered by God’s own mouth is to be of perpetual use in the church. Therefore the law was written in tables of stone, to shew the perpetuity of it.

(3.) The moral law is very illustrious and full of glory. God did put glory upon it, in the manner of the promulgation of it. 1. The people, before the moral law was delivered, were to wash their clothes, Exod. xix. 10. Whereby, as by a type, God required the sanctifying of their ears and hearts to receive the law. 2. There were bounds set, that none might touch the mount, Exod. xix. 12. which was to breed in the people reverence to the law. 3. God wrote the law with his own finger, Exod. xxxi. 18. which was such an honour put upon the moral law, as we read of no other written. God did by some mighty operation make the law legible in letters, as if it had been written with his own finger. 4. God’s putting the law in the ark to be kept, was another signal mark of honour put upon it. The ark was the cabinet in which God put the ten commandments, as ten jewels. 5. At the delivery of the moral law, there was the attendance of many angels, Deut. xxxii. Here was a parliament of angels called, and God himself was the speaker.

Use 1. Here we may take notice of God’s goodness, who hath not left us without a law : therefore the Lord doth often set it down as a demonstration of his love, in giving his commandments, Ps. cxlvii. 20. ‘ He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for his judgments they have not known them.’ Neh. ix. 13. ‘ Thou gavest them true laws, good statutes and commandments.’ What a strange creature would man be, if he had no law to direct him ? There would be no living in the

world ; we should have none born but Ishmaels, every man's hand would be against his neighbour. Man would grow wild, if he had not affliction to tame him, and the moral law to guide him. The law of God is an hedge to keep us within the bounds of sobriety and piety.

*Use. 2.* If God spake all these words of the moral law, then it condemns, 1<sup>st</sup>, The Marcionites, and Manichees, who speak slightly, yea blasphemously of the moral law : they say, it is below a Christian, it is carnal ; which the apostle confutes, when he saith, ' The law is spiritual, but I am carnal.' Rom. vii. 14. 2<sup>dly</sup>, The Antinomians, who will not admit the moral law to be a rule to a believer. We say not he is under the curse of the law, but the commands, we say not the moral law is a Christ, but it is a star to lead one to Christ ; we say not it doth save, but it doth sanctify. They who cast God's law behind their backs, God will cast their prayers behind his back : they who will not have the law to rule them, shall have the law to judge them. 3<sup>dly</sup>, The Papists, who (as if God's law were imperfect, and when he spake all these words, he did not speak enough) add their canons and traditions to the moral law. This is to tax God's wisdom, as if he knew not how to make his own law. And surely it is an high provoking sin, Rev. xxii. 18. ' If any man shall add to these words, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book.' As it is a great evil to add any thing to a man's sealed will, so much more to add any thing to that law God himself spake, and wrote with his own fingers.

*Use. 3.* If God spake all these words, *viz.* of the moral law, then this presseth upon us several duties : 1. If God spake all these words, then we must hear all these words ; the words which God speaks are too precious to be lost. As we would have God hear all our words when we pray, so we must hear all his words when he speaks. We must not be as the deaf adder, which stoppeth her ears : he that stops his ears when God cries, shall cry himself, and not be heard.

2. If God spake all these words, then we must attend to them with reverence. Every word of the moral law is an oracle from heaven ; God himself is the preacher ; this calls for reverence. If a judge gives a charge upon the bench, all attend with reverence. In the moral law God himself gives a charge, ' God spake all these words : ' Therefore, with what veneration should we attend ? Moses put off his shoes from his feet, in token of reverence, when God was about to speak to him, Exod. iii. 5, 6.

3. If God spake all these words of the moral law, then we must remember them. Sure all God speaks is worth remembering ; those words are weighty which concern salvation, Deut. xxxii. 47. ' It is not a vain thing for you because it is your

life.' Our memory should be like the chest in the ark, where the law was kept : God's oracles are ornament, and shall we forget them? Jer. ii. 2, 32. ' Can a maid forget her ornament?'

4. If God spake all these words, then believe them. See the name of God written upon every commandment. The heathens, that they might gain credit to their laws, reported that they were inspired by the gods at Rome. The moral law fetcheth its pedigree from heaven : *ipse dixit*, God spake all these words. Shall we not give credit to the God of heaven? How would the angel confirm the woman in the resurrection of Christ, Mat. xxviii. 7. ' Lo, (saith he) I have told you ;' I speak in the word of an angel. Much more should the moral law be believed, when it comes to us in the word of God. ' God spake all these words.' Unbelief enervates the virtue of God's word, and makes it prove abortive, Heb. iv. 2. ' The word did not profit, not being mixed with faith.' Eve gave more credit to the devil when he spake, than she did to God.

5. If God spake all these words, then love the commandments, Ps. cxix. 97. ' O how love I thy law? it is my meditation all the day.' ' Consider how I love thy precepts,' Ps. cxix. 159. The moral law is the copy of God's will, our spiritual directory, it shews us what sins to avoid, what duties to pursue : the ten commandments are a chain of pearls to adorn us, they are our treasury to enrich us ; they are more precious than lands of spices, or rocks of diamonds, Ps. cxix. 72. ' The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver.' The law of God hath truth and goodness in it, Neh. ix. 13. Truth, for God spake it ; and goodness, for there is nothing the commandment enjoins, but is for our good : O then let this command our love.

6. If God spake all these words, then teach your children the law of God, Deut. vi. 7. ' These words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children.' He who is godly, is both a diamond and a loadstone ; a diamond for the sparkling of his grace ; and a loadstone, for his attractive virtue in drawing others to the love of God's precepts, *vir bonus magis aliis prodest quam sibi*. You that are parents, discharge your duty : though you cannot impart grace to your children, yet you may impart knowledge. Let your children know the commandments of God, Deut. ix. 19. ' Ye shall teach them to your children.' You are careful to leave your children a portion ; leave the oracles of heaven with them ; instruct them in the law of God : if God spake all these words, you may well speak them over again to your children.

7. If God spake all these words, then the moral law must be obeyed : if a king speaks, his word commands allegiance ; much



more, when God speaks, all his words must be subscribed to. Some will obey partially, obey some commandments, not others; like a plough, which when it comes to a stiff piece of earth, makes a baulk: but God that spake all the words of the moral law, will have all obeyed: God will not dispense with the breach of one law. Indeed princes, for special reasons, dispense sometimes with penal statutes, and will not take the severity of the law: but God, who spake all these words, binds men with a *subpœna* to yield obedience to every law. This condemns the church of Rome, who instead of obeying the whole moral law, blot out one commandment, and dispense with others.

1. They leave out the second commandment out of their catechises, because it makes against images; and to fill up the number of ten, they divide the tenth commandment into two. Thus they run themselves into that dreadful premunire, Rev. xxii. 19. 'If any man shall take away from the words of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.'

2. As they blot out one commandment, and cut that knot which they cannot untie: so they dispense with other commandments; they dispense with the sixth commandment, making murder meritorious, in case of propagating the catholic cause: they dispense with the seventh commandment, wherein God forbids adultery; the Pope dispenseth with the sin of uncleanness, yea, incest, only paying such fines and sums of money into his coffer. No wonder the Pope takes men off from their loyalty to kings and princes, when he teacheth them disloyalty to God. Some of the papists say expressly in their writings, that the Pope hath power to dispense with the laws of God, and can give men a licence to break the commandments of the Old and New Testament. That such a religion ever get foot in England, the Lord in mercy prevent. If God spake all the commandments, then we must obey all; he who breaks this hedge of the commandments, a serpent shall bite him.

Obj. *But what man alive can obey all God's commandments?*

Ans. To obey the law in a legal sense. *viz.* to do all the law requires, no man alive can; sin hath cut the lock of original righteousness, where our strength lay: but, in a true gospel-sense, we may so obey the moral law, as to find acceptance. Which gospel obedience consists in a real endeavour to observe the whole moral law, Pf. cxix. 166. 'I have done thy commandments:' Not, I have done all I should do, but I have done all I am able to do; and wherein our obedience comes short, we look up to the perfect righteousness and obedience of Christ, and hope for pardon through his blood: this is evangelically to obey the moral law; which, though it be not to satisfaction, yet it is to acceptance. Thus I have done with the first, the preface to the preface, 'God spake all these words:' I should

now come to the second, the preface itself to the commandments, 'I am the Lord thy God,' &c.

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EXOD. xx. 2. *I am the Lord thy God, &c.*

II. THE preface itself, which consists of three parts : 1. 'I am the Lord thy God : 2. Which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt ; 3. Out of the house of bondage.'

First, *I am the Lord thy God.* Where we have a description of God ; 1. By his essential greatness, 'I am the Lord ;' 2. By his relative goodness, 'thy God.' 1<sup>st</sup>, By his essential greatness, 'I am the Lord,' or, as it is in the Hebrew, JEHOVAH. This great name God sets forth his majesty. *Sanctius habitum fuet*, saith Buxtorf. The name of Jehovah was had in more reverence among the Jews than any other name of God ; it signifies God's self-sufficiency, eternity, independency, immutability, Mal. iii. 6.

*Use 1.* If God be Jehovah, the fountain of being, who can do what he will ; let us fear this great Lord, Deut. xxviii. 58. 'That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, *Jehovah.*'

*Use 2.* If God be Jehovah, the supreme Lord ; then it condemns the blasphemous papists, who speak after this manner, *Our Lord God the Pope.* It is a wonder the pope lifts his triple crown above the head of kings and emperors, when he usurps God's title, 'shewing himself that he is God ?' 2 Theff. ii. 4. The pope goes to make himself Lord of heaven, for he will canonize saints there ; Lord of earth, for with his keys he doth bind and loose whom he pleaseth : Lord of hell, for he can free men out of purgatory : but God will pull down these plumes of pride ; he will consume 'this man of sin with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming,' 2 Theff. ii. 8.

2<sup>dly</sup>, God is described by his relative goodness, 'thy God :' had God only called himself Jehovah, it might have terrified us, and made us flee from him ; but when he saith, 'thy God,' this may allure and draw us to him : this, tho' a preface to the law, is pure gospel. This word *Elæka*, 'thy God,' is so sweet, that we can never suck out all the honey in it. 'I am thy God,' not only by creation, but by election. This word, 'thy God,' though it was spoken to Israel, yet it is a charter belongs to all the saints. For the further explication, here are three questions.

Q. 1. *How God comes to be our God ?*

*Ans.* Through Jesus Christ. Christ is a middle person in the Trinity : he is *Emmanuel*, 'God with us :' he brings two different parties together ; he makes our nature lovely to God, and God's nature lovely to us : he, by his death, causeth friend-

ship, yea, union : he brings us within the verge of the covenant, and so God becomes our God.

Q. 2. *What doth this imply God being our God ?*

Ans. It is comprehensive of all good things : God is our strong tower ; our fountain of living water ; our salvation. More particularly, God being our God implies the sweetest relation.

1. The relation of a father, 2 Cor. vi. 18. ‘ I will be a father unto you ; ’ a father is full of tender care for his child ; whom doth he settle the inheritance upon, but his child ? God being our God, will be a father to us ; a ‘ Father of mercy,’ 1 Cor. i. 3. ‘ The everlasting Father,’ Isa. ix. 7. If God be our God, we have a Father in heaven that never dies.

2. It imports the relation of a husband, Isa. liv. 5. ‘ Thy Maker is thy husband.’ If God be our husband, he esteems us precious to him, as the apple of his eye, Zech. ii. 8. He imparts his secrets to us, Psal. xxv. 18. He bestows a kingdom upon us for our dowry, Luke xii. 32.

Q. 3. *How may we come to know this covenant-union, that God is our God ?*

Ans. 1. By having his grace planted in us. King’s children are known by their costly jewels ; It is not having common gifts, which shews we belong to God ; many have the gifts of God without God ; but it is grace gives us a true genuine title to God. In particular, faith is *vinculum unionis* the grace of union ; by this we may spell out our interest in God. Faith doth not, as the mariner, cast its anchor downwards, but upwards ; it trusts in the mercy and blood of God, and trusting in God, engageth him to be our God ; other graces make us like God, faith makes us one with him.

2. We may know God is our God, by having the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts, 2 Cor. i. 22. God often gives the purse to the wicked, but the Spirit only to such as he intends to make his heirs. (1.) Have we had the consecration of the Spirit ? If we have not had the sealing work of the Spirit, have we had the healing work ? 1 John ii. 20. ‘ Ye have an unction from the holy One.’ The Spirit, where it is, stamps the impress of its own holiness upon the heart : it embroiders and bespangles the soul, and makes it all glorious within. (2.) Have we had the attraction of the Spirit ? Cant. i. 4. ‘ Draw me, we will run after thee.’ Hath the Spirit, by its magnetic virtue, drawn our hearts to God ? Can we say, as Cant. i. 7. ‘ O thou whom my soul loveth !’ Is God our paradise of delight ? Our *Segullah*, or chief treasure ! Are our hearts so chained to God, that no other object can enchant us, or draw us away from him ? (3.) Have we had the elevation of the Spirit ? Hath it raised our hearts above the world ? Ezek. iii. 14. ‘ The Spirit lifted me up.’



Hath the Spirit made us *suprema an helare*, seek the things above where Christ is? Though our flesh is on earth, is our heart in heaven? though we live here, trade we above? Hath the Spirit thus lifted us up? By this we may come to know, that God is our God; where God gives his Spirit for an earnest, there he gives himself for a portion.

3. We may know God is our God, if he hath given us the hearts of children. Have we obediential hearts? Psal. xxvii.

8. Do we subscribe to God's commands, when his commands cross our will? A true saint is like the flower of the sun, it opens and shuts with the sun: he opens to God, and shuts to sin. If we have the hearts of children then God is our father.

4. We may know God is ours, and we have an interest in him, by our standing up for his interest. We will appear in his cause, and vindicate his truth, wherein his glory is so much concerned. Athanasius was the bulwark of truth; he stood up for it, when most of the world were Arians. In former times the nobles of Polonia, when the gospel was read, did lay their hands upon their swords, signifying that they were ready to defend the faith, and hazard their lives for the gospel: no better sign of our having an interest in God, than by our standing up for his interest.

5. We may know God is ours, and we have an interest in him, by his having an interest in us, Cant. ii. 16. 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' When God saith to the soul, 'Thou art mine;' the soul answers, 'Lord, I am thine:' all I have is at thy service; my head shall be thine, to study for thee; my tongue shall be thine to praise thee. If God be our God by way of donation, we are his by way of dedication: we live to him, and are more his than we are our own. And thus we may come to know that God is our God.

*Use 1.* Above all things let us get this great charter confirmed, That God is our God: Deity is not comfortable without propriety. *Tolle meum, et tulle Deum*, Aug. O let us labour to get sound evidences, that God is our God: we cannot call health, liberty, estate ours; O let us be able to call God ours, and say as the church, Psal. lxxvii. 6. 'God, even our own God shall bless us.' Let every soul here labour to pronounce this *Shibboleth*, 'My God.' And that we may endeavour after this to have God for our God; consider, (1.) The misery of such as have not God for their God: in how sad a condition are they, when an hour of distress comes? this was Saul's case, 1 Sam. xxviii. 13. 'I am sore distressed, for the Philistines make war against me, and the Lord is departed from me.' A wicked man, in time of trouble, is like a vessel tossed on the sea without an anchor, it falls on rocks or sands: a sinner, not having God to be his God, tho' he makes a shift while health and

estate last, yet, when these crutches, which he leaned upon are broken, his heart sinks. It is with a wicked man, as it is with the old world, when the flood came; the waters at first came to the valleys, but then the people would get to the hills and mountains, but when the waters came to the mountains, then there might be some trees on the high hills, and they would climb up to them: ay, but then the waters did rise up to the tops of the trees: now all hopes of being saved were gone, their hearts failed them. So it is with a man that hath not God to be his God: if one comfort be taken away, he hath another: if he lose a child, he hath an estate: ay, but when the waters rise higher, death comes and takes away all; now he hath nothing to help himself with, no God to go to, he must needs die despairing. (2.) How great a privilege it is to have God for our God? Psal. cxliv. 15. 'Happy are the people whose God is the Lord.' *Beatitudo hominis est Deus*, Aug. That you may see the privilege of this charter;

1. If God be our God, then, though we may feel the stroke of evil, yet not the sting. He must needs be happy, who is in such a condition, that nothing can hurt him: if he lose his name, it is written in the book of life; if he lose his liberty, his conscience is free; if he lose his estate, he is possessed of the pearl of price; if he meets with storms, he knows where to put in for harbour; God is his God, and heaven is his haven.

2. If God be our God, then our soul is safe. The soul is the jewel, it is a blossom of eternity, Dan. vii. 15. 'I was grieved in the midst of my body;' in the Chaldee it is in the midst of my sheath. The body is but the sheath; the soul is the princely part of man, which sways the sceptre of reason; it is a celestial spark, as Damascene calls it. If God be our God, the soul is safe, as in a garrison; death can do no more hurt to a virtuous heaven-born soul, than David did to Saul, when he cut off the lap of his garment: the soul is safe, being hid in the promises; hid in the wounds of Christ; hid in God's decree. The soul is the pearl, and heaven is the cabinet where God will lock it up safe.

3. If God be our God, then all that is in God is ours: the Lord saith to a saint in covenant, as the king of Israel to the king of Syria, 1 Kings xx. 4. 'I am thine, and all that I have.' So saith God, 'I am thine:' how happy is he who not only inherits the gift of God, but inherits God himself? All that I have shall be thine; my wisdom shall be thine, to teach thee; my power shall be thine, to support thee; my mercy shall be thine, to save thee. God is an infinite ocean of blessedness, and there is enough in him to fill us: if a thousand vessels be thrown into the sea, there is enough in the sea to fill them.

4. If God be our God, he will entirely love us: propriety is

the ground of love. God may give men kingdoms, and not love them; but he cannot be our God, and not love us: he calls his covenanted saints, *Jediduth Naphshi*, 'The dearly beloved of his soul,' Jer. xii. 7. 'He rejoiceth over them with joy, and rests in his love,' Zeph. iii. 17. They are his refined silver, Zech. xiii. 9. His jewels, Mal. iii. 17. His royal diadem, Isa. lxii. 3. He gives them the cream and flower of his love: he not only opens his hand and fills them, Psal. cxlv. 17. but opens his heart and fills them.

5. If God be our God, he will do more for us than all the world besides can. What is that? (1.) He will give us peace in trouble: when a storm without, he will make music within. The world can create trouble in peace, but God can create peace in trouble: he will send the Comforter, who, as a dove, brings an olive-branch of peace in his mouth, John xiv. 16. (2.) God will give us a crown of immortality: the world can give a crown of gold, but that crown hath thorns in it, and death in it: but God will give 'a crown of glory that fadeth not away,' 1 Pet. v. 4. The garland made of the flowers of paradise never withers.

6. If God be our God, he will bear with many infirmities: God may respite sinners a while, but long forbearance is no acquittance; he will throw them to hell for their sins; but if God be our God, he will not for every failing destroy us; he bears with his spouse as with the weaker vessel: God may chastise, Psal. lxxxix. 32. He may use the rod and the pruning-knife, but not the bloody axe, Numb. xxiii. 21. 'He hath not seen iniquity in Jacob:' he will not see sin in his people, so as to destroy them; he sees their sins so as to pity them: he sees them as a physician sees a disease in his patient, to heal him, Isa. lvii. 18. 'I have seen his iniquities, and I will heal him.' Every failing doth not break the marriage-bond asunder. The disciples had great failings, they all forsook Christ, and fled; but this did not break off their interest in God; therefore, saith Christ, at his ascension, 'Tell my disciples, I go to my God and to their God.'

7. If God be once our God, he is so for ever, Psal. xlviii. 14. 'This God is our God for ever and ever.' Whatever worldly comforts we have, are but for a season, Heb. xi. 25. we must part with all. As Paul's friends did accompany him to the ship, and there left him, Acts xx. 28. so all our earthly comforts will but go with us to the grave, and there leave us. You cannot say you have health, and shall have it for ever; you have a child, and shall have it for ever; but if God be your God, you shall have him for ever; 'This God is our God for ever and ever.' If God be our God, he will be a God to us as long as he is a God: 'You have taken away my gods,' saith Micah,



Judges xviii. 24. But it cannot be said so to a believer, that his God is taken away; he may lose all things else, but cannot lose his God. God is ours from everlasting in election, and to everlasting in glory.

8. If God be our God, we shall enjoy all our godly relations with him in heaven. The great felicity on earth, is to enjoy relations; a father sees his own picture in a child; a wife sees a piece of herself in her husband, we plant the flower of love among our relations, and the loss of them is like the pulling of a limb from the body. But if God be ours, with enjoying God we shall enjoy all our pious relations in glory. The gracious child shall see his godly father, the virtuous wife shall see her religious husband in Christ's arms; and then there will be a dearer love to relations than ever was before, though in a far different manner; then relations shall meet and never part: 'And so shall we be ever with the Lord.'



EXOD. xx. 2. *I am the Lord thy God, &c.*

To all such as can make out this covenant-union, it exhorts to several things.

I. If God be our God, let us improve our interest in him, cast all our burdens upon him; the burden of our fears, wants, sins, Psal. lv. 22. 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord.' Wicked men, who are a burden to God, have no right to cast their burden upon him; but such as have God for their God, are called upon to cast their burden on him. Where should the child ease all its cares, but in the bosom of its parent? Judges xix. 26. 'Let all thy wants lie upon me.' So God seems to say to his children, Let all your wants lie upon me. Christian, what doth trouble thee? thou hast a God to pardon thy sins, to supply thy wants: therefore roll your burden on the Lord, 1 Pet. v. 7. 'Casting all your care on him.' Whence are Christians so disquieted in their minds? they are taking care, when they should be casting care.

II. If God be our God, let us learn to be contented, though we have the less other things. Contentment is a rare jewel, it is the cure of care. If we have God to be our God, well may we be contented: 'I know whom I have believed,' 2 Tim. i. 12. There was Paul's interest in God, 2 Cor. vi. 10. 'As having nothing, yet possessing all:' there was his content. That such who have covenant-union with God may be filled with contentation of spirit, consider what a rich blessing God is to the soul.

1. God *bonum sufficiens*, a sufficient good. He who hath

God, hath enough. If a man be thirsty bring him to the ocean, and he is satisfied; in God there is enough to fill the heaven-born soul: 'He gives grace and glory,' Psal. lxxxiv. 11. There is in God not only a sufficiency, but a redundancy; he is not only full as a vessel, but as a spring. Other things can no more fill the soul, than a mariner's breath can fill the sails of a ship: but in God is a *cornucopia*, an infinite fulness; he hath enough to fill the angels, therefore enough to fill us. The heart is a triangle, which only the Trinity can fill.

2. God is *bonum sanctificans*, a sanctifying good. 1. He sanctifies all our comforts, and turns them into blessings. Health is blessed, estate is blessed; he gives with the venison a blessing, Psal. cxxxii. 15. 'I will abundantly bless her provision.' He gives us that life we have *tanquam arrabo*, as an earnest of more. He gives us the little meal in the barrel, as an earnest of the royal feast in paradise. 2. He sanctifies all our crosses: they shall not be destructive punishments, but medicines; they shall corrode and eat out the venom of sin, they shall polish and refine our grace. The more the diamond is cut, it sparkles the more. God's stretching the strings of his viol, is to make the music better.

3. God is *bonum selectum*, a choice good. All things *sub sole*, are but *bona scabelli*, as Austin, the blessings of the footstool; but to have God himself to be ours, is the blessing of the throne. Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines, but he settled the inheritance upon Isaac, Gen. xxv. 4. 'Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.' God may send away the men of the world with gifts, a little gold and silver; but, in giving us himself, he gives us the very quintessence, his grace, his love, his kingdom: here is the crowning blessing.

4. God is *bonum summum*, the chief good. In the chief good there must be, *First*, delectability, it must have something that is delicious and sweet: and where can we suck those pure quintessential comforts, which ravish us with delight, but in God? *In Deo quadam dulcedine delectatur anima, imo rapitur*; 'At God's right hand are pleasures,' Psal. xvi. 11. *Secondly*, In the chief good there must be transcendency, it must have a surprising excellency. Thus God is infinitely better than all other things; it is below the Deity to compare other things with it. Who would go to weigh a feather with a mountain of gold? God is *fons et origo*, the spring of all entities, and the cause is more noble than the effect. It is God that bespangles the creation, that puts light into the sun, that fills the veins of the earth with silver; creatures do but maintain life, God gives life. God infinitely outshines all sublunary glory; he is better than the soul, than angels, than heaven. *Thirdly*, In the chief good, there must be not only fulness, but variety; where va-

riety is wanting, we are apt to nauseate; to feed only on honey, would breed loathing; but in God is all variety of fulness, Col. i. 19. He is an universal good, commensurate to all our wants; he is *bonum in quo omnia bona*, a son, a portion, an horn of salvation: he is called the 'God of all comfort,' 2 Cor. i. 3. There is a complication of all beauties and delights in him: health hath not the comfort of beauty, nor beauty of riches, nor riches of wisdom; but God is the God of all comfort. *Fourthly*, In the chief good there must be eternity. God is a treasure that can neither be drawn low, nor drawn dry. Though the angels are still spending on him, he can never be spent; he abides for ever. Eternity is a flower of his crown. Now, if God be our God, here is enough to let in full contentment into our souls. What tho' we want torch-light, if we have the sun? what if God deny us the flower, if he hath given us the jewel? how should this rock a Christian's heart quiet? if we say God is our God, and we are not content, we have cause to question our interest in him.

III. If we can clear up this covenant-union, that God is our God, let this cheer and revive us in all conditions. To be content with God, is not enough, but to be cheerful. What greater cordial can you have, than union with Deity; when Jesus Christ was ready to ascend, he could not leave a richer consolation with his disciples than this, 'Tell them, I go to my God and their God,' John xx. 17. Who should rejoice, if not they, who have an infinite, all-sufficient, eternal God to be their portion, who are as rich as heaven can make them? what though I want health? I have God, who is the health of my countenance, and my God, Psal. xlii. 11. What though I am low in the world? if I have not the earth, I have him that made it. The philosopher comforted himself with this, though he had no music or vine trees, yet here are the household-gods with me: so, though we have not the vine or fig-tree, yet we have God with us. I cannot be poor, saith St. Bernard, as long as God is rich: for his riches are mine. O let the saints rejoice in this covenant-union! To say God is ours, is more than to say heaven is ours; heaven would not be heaven without God. All the stars cannot make day without the sun; all the angels, those morning-stars, cannot make heaven without Christ the Sun of righteousness. And as to have God for our God is matter of rejoicing in life; so especially it will be at our death. Let a Christian think thus, I am going to my God. A child is glad when he is going home to his father. This was Christ's comfort, when he was leaving the world, John xx. 17. 'I go to my God.' And this is a believer's death-bed cordial, I am going to my God; I shall change my place, but not my kindred; I go to my God and my Father.



IV. If God be our God, then let us break forth into doxology and praise, Psal cxviii. 28. 'Thou art my God, and I will praise thee.' O infinite, astonishing mercy, that God should take dust and ashes into so near a bond of love as to be our God! As Micah said, Judges xviii. 24. 'What have I more?' so, what hath God more? what richer jewel hath he to bestow upon us than himself? what hath he more? That God should put off most of the world with riches and honour, that he should pass over himself to us by a deed of gift, to be our God, and by virtue of this settle a kingdom upon us; O let us praise him with the best instrument, our heart; and let this instrument be screwed up to the highest peg; let us praise him with our whole heart. See how David riseth by degrees, Ps. xxxii. 11. 'Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, and shout for joy.' [*Be glad,*] there is thankfulness; [*Rejoice,*] there is chearfulness; [*Shout*] there is triumph. Praise is called incense, because it is so sweet a sacrifice. Let the saints be choristers in God's praises. The deepest springs yield the sweetest water; the more deeply sensible we are of God's covenant-love to us, the sweeter praises we should yield. We should begin here to eternize God's name, and do that work on earth which we shall be always doing in heaven, Ps. cxlvi. 2. 'While I live, will I praise the Lord.'

V. Let us carry ourselves as those who have God to be our God; that is, when we walk so, that others may see there is something of God in us. Live holily; what have we to do with sin? is it not this, that if it doth not break, yet it will weaken the interest? Hos. xiv. 8. 'What have I to do any more with idols?' So should a Christian say, God is my God; what have I to do any more with sin, with lust, pride, malice! bid me commit sin! as well bid me drink poison; shall I forfeit my interest in God? Let me rather die, than willingly offend him, who is the crown of my joy, the God of my salvation.

.....GOD.....

#### EXOD. xx. 2. *The Land of Egypt, &c.*

THE second part of the preface, 'Who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.' Egypt and the house of bondage are the same; only they are represented to us under a different expression, or notion. I begin with the first expression, 'Who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.'

Q. *Why doth the Lord mention this deliverance of Israel out of Egypt.*

Ans. 1. Because of the strangeness of the deliverance. God delivered his people Israel by strange signs and wonders, by

sending plague after plague upon Pharaoh, blasting the fruits of the earth, killing all the first-born in Egypt, Exod. xii. 29. And when Israel marched out of Egypt, God made the waters of the sea to part, and become a wall to his people, while they went on dry ground; and as he made the sea a caufeway to Israel, so a grave to Pharaoh and his chariots. Well might the Lord mention his bringing them out of the land of Egypt, because of the strangeness of the deliverance; God wrought miracle upon miracle, for their deliverance.

2. God mentions Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, because of the greatness of the deliverance. God delivered Israel from the pollutions of Egypt; Egypt was a bad air to live in, it was infected with idolatry; the Egyptians were gross idolaters, they were guilty of that which the apostle speaks of, Rom. i. 23. 'They changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.' The Egyptians worshiped, instead of the true God, *First*, corruptible man, they deified their king Apis, forbidding all, under pain of death, to say that he was a man. *2dly*, They were worshippers of birds, they worshipped the hawk. *3dly*, They were worshippers of beasts, they worshipped the ox: thus they made the image of a beast to be their god. *4thly*, They were worshippers of creeping things, they worshipped the crocodile, and the Indian mouse. Therefore God mentions this as a memorable and signal favour to Israel, that he brought them out of such an idolatrous country; 'I brought thee out of the land of Egypt.'

The thing I would note is this, That it is no small blessing to be delivered from places of idolatry. God speaks of it no less than ten times in the Old Testament, 'I brought you out of the land of Egypt;' an idolatrous place. Had there been no iron furnace in Egypt, yet there being so many altars there and false gods, it was a great privilege to Israel to be delivered out of Egypt. Joshua reckons it among the chief and most memorable mercies of God to Abraham, that he brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees, where Abraham's ancestors served strange gods, Josh. xxiv. 2, 3. 'It is well for the plant that is set in a bad soil, to be transplanted to a better, where it may grow and flourish; so, when any are planted among idolaters, it is a mercy when they are removed and transplanted into Zion, where are the silver-drops of God's word to make them grow in holiness.

Qu. *Wherein doth it appear that it is such a great blessing to be delivered from places of idolatry?*

Ans. It is a great mercy, because our nature is so prone to idolatry. Israel began to be defiled with the idols of Egypt, Ezek. xxiii. 3. Dry wood is not more prone to take fire, than

our nature is to idolatry. The Jews made cakes to the queen of heaven, that is the moon. Jer. vii. 18.

Qu. *Whence is it that we are so prone to idolatry?*

Ans. 1. Because we are led much by visible objects, and love to have our senses pleased. Men naturally fancy a god that they may see; though it be such a god that cannot see them, yet they would see it. The true God is invisible; this makes the idolater worship something that he may see.

2. It is a mercy to be delivered from idolatrous places, because of the greatness of the sin of idolatry. It is giving that glory to an image, which is due to God. All divine worship God doth appropriate to himself; it is a flower of his crown: the fat of the sacrifice God laid claim to, Lev. iii. 3. Divine worship is the fat of the sacrifice, which God reserves for himself. The idolater devotes this worship to his idol, which the Lord will by no means endure, Isa. xlii. 8. 'My glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.' Idolatry is spiritual adultery, Ezek. xxiii. 37. 'With their idols have they committed adultery.' To worship any other than God, is to break wedlock: this makes the Lord disclaim his interest in a people, Hos. ii. 2. 'Plead with your mother, plead, she is not my wife.' And Exod. xxxii. 7. 'Thy people have corrupted themselves;' no more my people, but thy people. God calls idolatry blasphemy, Ezek. xx. 27, 31. 'Thus your fathers have blasphemed me.' Idolatry is devil-worship, Deut. xxxii. 17. 'They sacrificed to devils, not unto God; to new gods:' These new gods were old devils, Lev. xvii. 7. 'And they shall no more offer their sacrifice unto devils;' the Hebrew word *Lashegnirim*, is the hairy ones, because the devils were hairy, and appeared in the forms of satyrs and goats. How dreadful a sin is idolatry; and what a signal mercy is it to be snatched out of an idolatrous place, as Lot was snatched by the angels out of Sodom?

3. It is a mercy to be delivered out of idolatrous places, because idolatry is such a silly, irrational religion, I may say, as Jer. viii. 9. 'What wisdom is in them?' Is it not folly to refuse the best, and choose the worst? The trees in the field of Jotham's parable, despised the vine-tree which cheers both God and man, and the olive which is full of fatness, and the fig-tree which is full of sweetness, and chose the bramble to reign over them; this was a foolish choice, Judg. ix. so, for us to refuse the living God, who hath power to save us, and to make choice of an idol, that hath eyes and sees not, feet, but walks not, Ps. cxv. 6. What a prodigy of madness is this? Therefore, to be delivered from committing such folly, is a mercy.

4. It is a mercy to be delivered from idolatrous places, because of the sad judgments inflicted upon idolaters. This is a



fin which enrageth God, and makes the fury come up in his face, Ezek. xxxviii. 18. Search through the whole book of God, and you shall find no sin God hath followed with more plagues than idolatry, Pf. xvi. 4. 'Their sorrows shall be multiplied, that hasten after another god.' Pf. lxxviii. 58, 59. 'They moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel;' ver. 60. 'So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh.' Shiloh was a city belonging to the tribe of Ephraim; there God set his name, Jer. vii. 12. But, for their idolatry God forsook that place, gave his people up to the sword, caused his priests to be slain, his ark to be carried away captive, and it never returned to Shiloh any more. How severe was God against Israel for worshipping the golden calf? Exod. xxxii. 27. The Jews say, that in every misery that befalls them, there is *uncio aurei vituli*, an ounce of the golden calf in it, Rev. xviii. 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.' Idolatry lived in, cuts men off from heaven, 1 Cor. vi. 9. So then it is no small mercy to be delivered out of idolatrous places.

*Use 1.* See the goodness of God to our nation, who hath brought us out of mystical Egypt, delivering us from popery, which is Romish idolatry, and hath caused the light of his truth to break forth gloriously among us. In former times, and more lately in the Marian days, England was overspread with idolatry; we worshipped God after a false manner; that is idolatry, not only to worship a false god, but the true God in a false manner. This was our case formerly, we had purgatory, indulgencies, the idolatrous mass, the Scriptures locked up in an unknown tongue, invocation of saints and angels, image-worship. Images are teachers of lies, Hab. ii. 18. Wherein do they teach lies? because they represent God in a bodily shape, whereas he cannot be seen, Deut. iv. 12. 'Ye saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice.' *Quod invisibile est, pingi, non potest*, Ambr. God cannot be pictured out by any finger? you cannot picture the soul, being a spirit; much less God, Isa. xl. 18. 'To whom then will ye liken God?' The papists say, they worship God by the image; which hath a great absurdity in it, for if it be absurd to bow down to the picture of a king, when the king himself is present, then much more to bow down to the image of God, when God himself is present, Jer. xxiii. 24. What is the popish religion, but a bundle of ridiculous ceremonies? their wax, flowers, *pixes agnes Dei*, cream and oil, beads, crucifixes: what are these but Satan's policy, to dress up a carnal worship, fitted to carnal minds? Oh what cause have we to bless God, for delivering us from popery! It was a mercy to be delivered from the Spanish invasion and the powder-treason; but a far

greater to be delivered from the popish religion, which would have made God give us a bill of divorce.

2. If it be a great blessing to be delivered from Egypt, popish idolatry; then it shews their sin and folly, who, being brought out of Egypt, are willing to return into Egypt again; having put off the yoke of Rome, would fain put it on again. The apostle saith, 'Flee from idolatry:' 1 Cor. x. 14. But these rather flee to idolatry: herein we are like the people of Israel, who, notwithstanding all the idolatry and tyranny of Egypt, yet longed to go back to Egypt, Numb. xiv. 4. 'Let us make a captain and return into Egypt.' But how shall they go back into Egypt? how shall they have food in the wilderness? will God rain down manna any more upon such rebels? how will they get over the red sea? will God divide the water again by miracle, for such as leave his service, and go into idolatrous Egypt? yet, say they, Let us make a captain. And are there not such spirits amongst us, who say, 'Let us make a captain and go back to Romish Egypt again? and if we do, what shall we get by it? I am afraid the leeks and onions of Egypt will make us sick.' Do we ever think, if we drink in the cup of fornication, we shall drink in the cup of salvation? O that any should so forfeit their reason, as to enslave themselves to the see of Rome! that they should be willing to hold a candle to a mass priest, and bow down to a strange god! let us not say, we will make a captain; but rather say as Ephraim, Hos. xiv. 8. 'What have I to do any more with idols?'

3. If it be a mercy to be brought out of Egypt, then it is not desirable or safe to plant one's self in an idolatrous place, where it may be a capital crime to be seen with a Bible in one's hand. Some for secular gain thrust themselves among idolaters, and think there is no danger to live where Satan's seat is: but do you pray God would not lead you into temptation, and do you lead yourselves? you are in great danger of being polluted: it is hard to be as the fish, which keeps fresh in salt waters. A man cannot dwell among the Blackmoors, but he will be discoloured; you will sooner be corrupted by idolaters, than they will be converted by you: Joseph got no good by living in an idolatrous court; he did not teach Pharaoh to pray, but Pharaoh taught him to swear, Ps. cvi. 35. They 'were mingled among the heathen, and served their idols.' I fear this hath been the undoing of many; they have seated themselves amongst idolaters, for advancing their trade, and at last have not only traded with them in their commodities, but in their religion.

*Use 2.* It is a mercy to be brought out of the land of Egypt, places which are defiled, and where sin reigns? then it reproaches such parents as shew little love to the souls of their children, whether it be in putting them out to service or match-

ing them. 1. In putting them out to service: their care is chiefly for their bodies, that they may be provided for, but care not what becomes of their souls; their souls are in Egypt, in houses where there is drinking, swearing, sabbath-breaking, and where God's name is every day dishonoured. 2. In matching their children, they look only at money, 2 Cor. vi. 24. 'Be not ye unequally yoked:' if their children be equally yoked for estate, they care not whether they be unequally yoked for religion: now, to such parents, 1. Think how precious the soul of your child is; it is immortal, it is capable of communion with God, and angels: and will you let this soul be lost, by placing it in a bad family? If you had an horse you loved, you would not put him into a stable with other horses that were sick and diseased; and do you not love your child better than your horse? 2. God hath intrusted you with the souls of your children, you have a charge of souls. God saith, as 1 Kings xx. 36. 'Keep this man; if he be missing, thy life shall go for his life.' So saith God, if the soul of thy child miscarry by thy negligence, his blood will I require at thy hand. Think of this, all ye parents; take heed of placing your children in Egypt, in a wicked family; do not put them in the devil's mouth: find out a sober, religious family, such a family as Joshua's, chap. xxiv. 15. 'I and my house will serve the Lord.' Such a family as Cranmer's which was *palæstra pietatis*, a nursery of piety: such a family as is a Bethel, of which it may be said, as Col. iv. 15. 'The church' which is in his house.'

*Use 3.* Let us pray that God would keep our English nation from the defilements of Egypt, that it may not be again overspread with superstition and idolatry: O sad religion: not only to have our estates, our bodies enslaved, but our conscience: pray that the true protestant religion may still flourish among us, that the son of the gospel may still shine in our horizon. The gospel lifts a people up to heaven, it is *columna et corana regni*, the crown and glory of the kingdom: if this be removed, then *Ichabod*, the glory is departed. The top of the beech-tree being cut off, the whole body of the tree withers apace: the gospel is the top of all our blessings; if this top be cut, the whole body politic will soon wither. O pray that the Lord will continue the visible tokens of his presence among us, his ordinances, that England may be called, *Jehovah Shammah*, 'The Lord is there,' Ezek. xlviii. 35. Pray that righteousness and peace may kiss each other, that so glory may dwell in our land.



EXOD. XX. 2. *Out of the House of Bondage.*

EGYPT and the house of bondage are the same, only they are expressed under a different notion. By Egypt is meant a place of idolatry and superstition; by the house of bondage is meant a place of affliction. Israel, while they were in Egypt, were under great tyranny; they had cruel task-masters set over them, who put them to hard labour, and set them to make brick, yet allowed them no straw; therefore Egypt is called the iron furnace, Deut. iv. 20. and here the house of bondage. From this expression, 'I brought thee out of the house of bondage,' two things are to be noted; 1. God's children may sometimes be under sore afflictions, 'In the house of bondage.' That God will, in his due time, bring them out of their afflicted state, 'I brought thee out of the house of bondage.'

1. God's children may sometimes be under sore afflictions, *In domo servitutis*, in the house of bondage: God's people have no writ of ease granted them, no charter of exemption from trouble in this life: while the wicked are kept in sugar, the godly are oft kept in brine. And indeed how could God's power be seen in bringing them out of trouble, if he did not sometimes bring them into it? or how should God wipe away the tears from their eyes in heaven, if on earth they shed none? doubtless God sees there is need that his children should be sometimes in the house of bondage, 1 Pet. i. 6. 'If need be, ye are in heaviness:' the body sometimes doth more need a bitter potion than a julap.

Qu. 1. *Why God lets his people be in the house of bondage, in an afflicted state?*

Ans. He doth it, 1. For probation or trial, Deut. viii. 16. 'Who led thee through that terrible wilderness, that he might humble thee and prove thee.' Affliction is the touch-stone of sincerity, Psal. xli. 10, 11. 'Thou, O God, hast proved us; thou hast tried us as silver: thou laidst affliction upon our loins.' Hypocrites may embrace the true religion in prosperity, and court this queen while she hath a jewel hung at her ear: but he is a good Christian who will keep close to God in a time of suffering, Psal. xli. 17. 'All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee;' to love God in heaven, is no wonder: but to love God when he chastiseth us, this discovers sincerity.

2. For purgation: to purge our corruption. *Ardeat palea, purgatur aurum*, Isa. xxvii. 9. 'And this is all the fruit, to take away his sin.' The eye, though it be a tender part, yet when it is sore, we put sharp powders and waters into it, to eat out the pearl: though the people of God are dear to him, yet,

when corruption begins to grow in them, he will apply the sharp powder of affliction, to eat out the pearl in the eye. Affliction is God's flail to thresh off our husks; it is a means God useth to purge out sloth, luxury, pride and love of the world. 'God's furnace is in Zion,' Isa. xxxi. 5. This is not to consume, but to refine: what if we have more affliction, if by this means we have less sin.

3. For augmentation: to increase the graces of the Spirit: grace thrives most in the iron furnace; sharp frosts nourish the corn, so do sharp afflictions grace: grace in the saints is often as fire hid in the embers, affliction is the bellows to blow it up into a flame. The Lord makes the house of bondage a friend to our grace: now faith and patience act their part; the darkness of the night cannot hinder the brightness of a star: so, the more the diamond is cut, the more it sparkles; and the more God afflicts us, the more our graces cast a sparkling lustre.

4. For preparation: to fit and prepare the saints for glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17. These stones which are cut out for a building, are first hewn and squared: the godly are called 'living stones,' 1 Pet. ii. 5. And God doth first hew and polish them by affliction, that they may be fit for the heavenly building: the house of bondage prepares for the house not made with hands, 2 Cor. v. 1. The vessels of mercy are seasoned with affliction, and then the wine of glory is poured in.

Qu. 2. *How do the afflictions of the godly differ from the afflictions of the wicked?*

Ans. 1. These are but castigations, those on the wicked are punishments: these come from a father, those from a judge.

2. Afflictions on the godly are fruits of covenant-mercy, 2 Sam. vii. 14. But afflictions on the wicked are effects of God's wrath, Eccl. v. 17. 'He hath much wrath with his sickness.' Afflictions on the wicked are the pledge and earnest of hell: they are like the pinioning of a malefactor, which doth presage his execution.

3. Afflictions on the godly make them better, but afflictions on the wicked make them worse: the godly pray more, Psal. cxxx. 1. The wicked blaspheme more, Rev. xvi. 9. 'Men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God.' Afflictions on the wicked make them more impenitent: every plague upon Egypt increased the plague of hardness in Pharaoh's heart. To what a prodigy of wickedness do some persons come after great sickness? affliction on the godly is like bruising of spices, which are more sweet and fragrant: affliction on the wicked is like stamping of weeds with a peltle, which makes them more unsavoury.

Use 1. It shews us, that we are not to wonder to see Israel in the house of bondage, 1 Pet. iv. 12. The holiness of the saints

will not excuse them from sufferings: Christ was the holy one of God, yet he was in the iron furnace: Christ's spouse is a lily among thorns, Cant. ii. 2. His sheep, though they have the ear-mark of election upon them, yet may have their wool fleeced off; the godly have some good in them, therefore the devil afflicts them; and some evil in them, therefore God afflicts them. While there are two seeds in the world, expect to be under the black rod. The gospel tells us of reigning, but first of suffering, 2 Tim. ii. 12.

2. It informs us, that affliction is not always the sign of God's anger: Israel, the apple of God's eye, a peculiar treasure to him above all people, Exod. xix. 5. yet these were in the house of bondage. We are apt to judge and censure them who are in an afflicted state. When the Barbarians saw the viper on Paul's hand, they said, 'No doubt this man is a murderer,' Acts xxviii. 4. so, when we see the viper of affliction fasten upon the godly, we are apt to censure them, and say, these are greater sinners than others, and God hates them: this rash censuring is for want of wisdom. Were not Israel in the house of bondage? Jeremiah in the dungeon? Paul a night and a day in the deep? God's afflicting is so far from evidencing hatred, that his not afflicting is, Hos. iv. 14. 'I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom.' *Deus maxime irascitur cum non irascitur*, Bern. God punisheth most when he doth not punish; his hand is heaviest when it seems to be lightest; the judge will not burn him in the hand whom he intends to execute.

3. If God's own Israel may be in the house of bondage, then afflictions do not of themselves demonstrate a man miserable. Indeed sin unrepented of, makes one miserable; but the cross doth not. If God had a design in afflicting his children, to make them happy, then they are not miserable; but God's afflicting them is to make them happy, therefore they are not miserable, Job. v. 17. 'Happy is the man whom God correcteth.' The world counts them happy, who can keep out of affliction; but the scripture calls them happy who are afflicted.

Qu. *How are they happy?*

Ans. (1.) Because they are more holy, Heb. xii. 10. (2.) Because they are more in God's favour, Prov. iii. 12. The goldsmith loves his gold when in the furnace. (3.) Because they have more of God's sweet presence, Ps. xci. 15. And they cannot be unhappy that have God's powerful presence in supporting, his gracious presence in sanctifying their affliction. (4.) Because, the more affliction they have, the more degrees of glory they shall have: the lower they have been in the iron furnace, they shall sit upon the higher throne of glory: the heavier their crosses, the heavier shall be their crown. So then, if



afflictions makes a Christian happy, they cannot denominate him miserable.

4. See the merciful providence of God to his children : though they may be in the house of bondage, and smart by affliction, yet they shall not be hurt by affliction. What hurt doth the fan to the corn ? only separates the chaff from it : or the lance to the body ? only lets out the imposthume. The house of bondage doth that which sometimes ordinances will not do ; it doth humble and reform, Job xxxvi. 8, 11. ‘ If they be held in cords of affliction, he openeth their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.’ O what a merciful providence is this, though God bruise his people ; yet, while he is bruising them, he is doing them good ? as if one should throw a bag of money at another, and a little bruise him, yet it doth enrich him. Affliction enricheth the soul, and yields the sweet fruits of righteousness, Heb. xii. 11.

5. If Israel be in the house of bondage ; if the Lord deals so with his own children, then, how severely will he deal with the wicked ? if God be so severe with them he loves, how severe will he be with them he hates ? if it be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry ? if they that pray and mourn for sin be so severely dealt with, what will become of them that swear, and break the sabbath, and are unclean ? If Israel be in the iron furnace, the wicked shall lie in the fiery furnace of hell. It should be the saddest news to wicked men, to hear that the people of God are afflicted, let them think how dreadful will the case of sinners be, 1 Pet. iv. 17. ‘ Judgment must begin at the house of God ; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel ?’ If God thresh his wheat, he will burn the chaff, If the godly suffer castigation, the wicked shall suffer condemnation. If he mingle his people’s cup with wormwood he will mingle the wicked’s cup with fire and brimstone.

2. *Use* 1. If Israel be in the house of bondage, then do not entertain too hard thoughts of affliction. Christians are apt to look upon the cross and the iron furnace as frightful things, and do what they can to shun them. Nay, sometimes to avoid affliction, they run themselves into sin. But do not think too hardly of affliction ; do not look upon it as through the multiplying-glass of fear ; the house of bondage is not hell. Consider, *First*, whence doth affliction come ? even from a wise God, who prescribes whatever befalls us. Persecutions are but like apothecaries. They give us that physic which God prescribes. *Secondly*, affliction hath its light side as well as its dark. God can sweeten our afflictions, candy our wormwood, 2 Cor. i. 5. ‘ As our sufferings abound, so doth all our consolation.’ Argærius dated his letters from the pleasant garden of the Leonine

prison. God doth sometimes so revive his children in trouble, that they had rather bear their afflictions than want their comforts. Why then should Christians entertain such hard thoughts of affliction? do not look at its grim face, but at the message it brings, which is to enrich us both with grace and comfort.

*2dly*, If Israel be sometimes in the house of bondage, in an afflicted state, then think before-hand of affliction; say not as Job xxix. 18. 'I shall die in my nest.' In the house of mirth, think of the house of bondage; you that are now Naomi, may be Marah, Ruth i. 20. how quickly may the scene turn, and the hyperbole of joy end in a catastrophe; all outward things are upon the Tropics, given to change. The forethoughts of affliction would make us sober and moderate in the use of lawful delight; it would cure a surfeit. Christ at a feast mentions his burial; a good antidote against a surfeit. The forethoughts of affliction would make us prepare for it; it would take us off the world, it would put us upon a search of our evidences.

We should see what oil we have in our lamp, what grace we can find, that we may be able to stand in the evil day. That soldier was imprudent who had his sword to whet, when he was just going to fight. He who forecasts sufferings, will have the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit ready, that he may not be surprized.

*3dly*, If afflictions do come, let us labour to deport ourselves wisely as Christians, that we may adorn our sufferings: that is, let us endure with patience; James v. 10. 'Take, my brethren, the prophets for an example of enduring affliction and patience.' Satan labours to take advantage of us in affliction, by making us either faint or murmur; he blows the coals of passion and discontent, and then warms himself at the fire. Patience adorns sufferings. A Christian should say as Jesus Christ, 'Lord, not my will, but thy will be done.' And indeed, it is a sign the affliction is sanctified, when the heart is brought to a sweet submissive frame, and then God will remove the affliction: he will take us out of the iron furnace. And that brings me to the second thing, God's deliverance of his people Israel, 'I brought you out of the house of bondage.'

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EXOD. xx. 2. *Who brought thee out of the house of bondage:*

WE may consider these words, 'Who brought thee out of the house of bondage;' either, 1. Literally; or, 2. Spiritually, and mystically. (1.) In the letter, 'I brought thee out of the house of bondage;' that is, I delivered you out of the misery and servitude you sustained in Egypt, when you were in

the iron furnace. (2.) Spiritually and mystically, 'I brought thee out of the house of bondage.' So it is a type of our deliverance by Christ from sin and hell.

*First*, Literally, in the letter, 'I brought thee out of the house of bondage.' viz. out of great misery and slavery in the iron furnace. The thing I note hence is, though God bring his people sometimes into trouble, yet he will bring them out again, Israel was in the house of bondage, but at last I brought you out of bondage. 1. That God doth deliver out of trouble. 2. In what manner. 3. When are the seasons. 4. Why God delivers. 5. How the deliverances of the godly and wicked out of trouble differ?

*1<sup>st</sup>*, That God doth deliver his children out of troubles, Psal. xxii. 4. 'Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted, and thou didst deliver them,' 2 Tim. iv. 17. 'And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion,' viz. from Nero. Psal. lxi. 11, 12. 'Thou laidst affliction upon our loins, but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.' Psal. xxx. 5. 'Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' God brought Daniel out of the lion's den, Zion out of Babylon. God, in his due time, gives an issue out of trouble, Psal. lxxviii. 20. The tree which in the winter seems dead, in the spring revives: *Post nubila Phœbus*. Affliction may leap on us as the viper did on Paul, but at last this viper shall be shaken off. It is called a cup of affliction, Isa. li. 17. The wicked drink a sea of wrath, the godly drink only a cup of affliction, and God will say shortly, *Let this cup pass away*. God will give his people a goal-delivery.

*2dly*, Qu. *In what manner doth God deliver his people out of trouble?*

*Ans.* He doth it like a God, in wisdom. 1. He doth it sometimes suddenly. As the angel was caused to fly swiftly, Dan. ix. 21. so God sometimes makes a deliverance fly swiftly upon the wing, and on a sudden he turns the shadow of death into the light of the morning. As God gives us mercies above what we can think, Eph. iii. 20. so sometimes before we can think of them, Psal. cxxvi. 1. 'When the Lord turned the captivity of Sion, we were like them that dreamed;' we were in a dream, we never thought of it. Joseph could not have thought of such a sudden alteration, to be the same day freed out of prison, and made the chief ruler in the kingdom. Mercy sometimes does not stick long in the birth, but it is brought forth on a sudden. 2. God sometimes delivers his people strangely. That the whale which swallowed up Jonah should be a means to bring him safe to land, God sometimes delivers his people in that very way they think he will destroy: in bringing Israel out of Egypt, God stirred up the heart of the Egyptians



to hate them; Psal. cv. 22. and that was the means of their deliverance. He brought Paul to shore by a contrary wind, and upon the broken pieces of the ship, Acts xxvii. 44.

3dly, Qu. *When are the times and seasons that God usually delivers his people out of the bondage of affliction?*

Ans. 1. When they were in the greatest extremity. When Jonah was in the belly of hell, then, chap. ii. 5. 'Thou hast brought up my life from corruption.' When there is but an hair's-breadth between the godly and death, then God ushers in deliverance. When the ship in the gospel was almost covered with waves, then Christ awoke and rebuked the wind. When Isaac was upon the altar, and the knife going to be put to his throat, then comes the angel, 'Lay not thy hand upon the child.' When Peter began to sink, then Christ took him by the hand. *Cum duplicantur lateres, venit, Moses*; when the tale of brick was doubled, then comes Moses the temporal saviour. When the people of God are in the greatest danger, then appears the morning-star of deliverance. When the patient is ready to faint, then the cordial is given.

2. The second season is, when affliction hath done its work upon them: when it hath effected that which which God hath sent it for. As, (1.) When it hath humbled them, Lam. iii. 19. 'Remembering my affliction, the wormwood and gall, my soul is humbled in me.' When God's corrosive hath eaten out the proud flesh. (2.) When it hath tamed their impatience. Before, they were proud and impatient, like froward children that would struggle with their parents: but when their curst hearts are tamed, and they say as Micah vii. 9. 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him;' and as Eli, 'It is the Lord; let him do what seems good:' Let him hedge me with thorns, if he will plant me with grace.

3. When they are more partakers of God's holiness, Heb. xii. 10. they are more full of heavenly-mindedness. When the sharp frost of affliction hath brought forth the spring-flowers of grace, now the cross is sanctified, and God will bring them out of the house of bondage. *Luctus in lætitiæ vertetar, cineres in corollas*. When the metal is refined, then it is taken out of the furnace; when affliction hath healed us, then God takes off the smarting plaister.

4thly, Qu. *Why doth God bring his people out of the house of bondage?*

Ans. Hereby he makes way for his own glory. God's glory is dearer to him than any thing besides; it is a crown-jewel. God by raising his people, raiseth the trophies of his own honour: he glorifies his attributes; his power, goodness, truth, do all ride in triumph.

1. His power. If God did not sometimes bring his people

into trouble, how would this power be seen in bringing them out? he brought Israel out of the house of bondage, with miracle upon miracle; he saved them with an out-stretched arm, Psal. cxiv. 5. 'What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest?' &c. It is spoken of Israel's march out of Egypt; 'When the sea fled, and the waters were parted from each other.' Here was the power of God set forth, Jer. xxxii. 27. 'Is any thing too hard for me?' God loves to help, when things seem past hope; he creates deliverance, Psal. cxxiv. 8. He brought Isaac out of a dead womb, and the Messiah out of a virgin's womb. O how doth his power shine forth, when he overcomes seeming impossibilities, and works a cure when things look desperate!

2. His truth. God hath made promises to his people when they are under great pressures to deliver them; and his truth is engaged in his promise, Psal. l. 15. 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee.' Job v. 19. 'He shall deliver thee in six troubles, and in seven.' How is the scripture bespangled with these promises, as the firmament is with stars? either God will deliver them from death, or by death; he will make a way to escape, 1 Cor. x. 13. When promises are verified, God's truth is magnified.

3. His goodness. God is full of compassion to such as are in misery. The Hebrew word, *Racham*, for mercy, signifies bowels. God hath 'founding of bowels,' Isa. lxiii. 15. And this sympathy stirs up God to deliver, Isa. lxiii. 9. 'In his love and pity he redeemed them.' This makes way for the triumph of God's goodness. For he is tender-hearted, he will not over-afflict; he cuts asunder the bars of iron, he breaks the yoke of the oppressor. Thus all his attributes ride in triumph, in saving his people out of trouble.

5thly, Qu. *How the deliverance of the godly and wicked out of trouble, differ?*

Ans. 1. The deliverances of the godly are preservations; of the wicked are reservations, 2 Pet. ii. 9. 'The Lord knows how to deliver the godly, and to reserve the unjust to be punished.' A sinner may be delivered from dangerous sickness, and out of prison; but all this is but a reservation to some greater evil.

2. God delivers the wicked (or rather spares them) in anger. Deliverances to the wicked are not given as pledges of God's love, but symptoms of displeasure; as quails were given to Israel in anger. But deliverances of the godly are in love, 2 Sam. xxii. 20. 'He delivered me because he delighted in me.' Isa. xxxviii. 17. 'Thou hast, in love to my soul, delivered me from the pit of corruption;' or as in the Hebrew, *Chashidaa Naphshi*, Thou hast loved me from the pit of corruption. A wicked man may say, Lord, thou hast delivered me out of the pit of corrup-

tion ; but a godly man may say, Lord, thou hast loved me out of the pit of corruption. It is one thing to have God's power deliver us, and another thing to have his love deliver us. O, saith Hezekiah, 'Thou hast, in love to my soul, delivered me from the pit of corruption.'

Qu. *How may it be known that a deliverance comes in love?*

Ans. 1. When a deliverance makes our heart boil over in love to God, Psal. cxvi. 1. 'I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice.' It is one thing to love our mercies, another thing to love the Lord : then a deliverance is in love, when it causeth love.

2. Then a deliverance is in love, when we have hearts to improve it for God's glory. The wicked instead of improving their deliverance for God's glory, improve their corruption : they grow worse after, as the metal when it is taken out of the fire grows harder ; but then our deliverance is in love, when we improve it for God's glory. God raiseth us out of a low condition, and we lift him up in our praises, and honour him with our substance, Prov. iii. 9. He recovers us from sickness, and we spend ourselves in his service. Mercy is not as the sun to the fire, to dull it, and put it out ; but as oil to the wheel, to make it move faster.

3. Then a deliverance comes in love, when it makes us more exemplary in holiness : our lives are walking Bibles. A thousand praises and doxologies do not honour God so much as the mortifying of one lust, Obadiah 17. 'On mount Zion there shall be deliverance and holiness.' When these two go together, deliverance and holiness ; when, being made monuments of mercy, we are patterns of piety ; now a deliverance comes in love, and we may say as Hezekiah, 'Thou hast loved me out of the pit of corruption.'

Use 1. If God brings his people out of bondage, then let none despond in trouble, say not, I shall sink under this burden ; as David, 'I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.' God can make this text good *personally* and *nationally*, to bring his people out of the house of bondage : when he sees a fit season, he will put forth his arm and save them ; and he can do it with ease, 2 Chron. xiv. 11. 'It is nothing for thee, Lord, to help.' He that turns the tides, can turn the times : he that raised Lazarus when he was dead, can raise thee when thou art sick, Isa. lxiii. 5. 'I looked, and there was none to help : therefore my own arm brought salvation.' Do not despond ; believe in God's power : faith sets God on work to deliver us.

Use 2. Labour (if you are in trouble) to be fitted for deliverance : many would have deliverance, but are not fitted for it.

Qu. *When are we fitted for deliverance?*



*Ans.* When we are, by our afflictions, conformed to Christ : namely, when we have learned obedience, Heb. v. 8. ‘ He learned obedience by the things which he suffered ;’ that is, he learned sweet submission to his Father’s will. Luke xxii. 42. ‘ Not my will but thy will be done.’ When we have thus learned obedience by our sufferings, we are willing to do what God would have us do, and be what God would have us be. Now we are conformed to Christ, and are fitted for deliverance.

3. If God had brought you at any time out of the house of bondage, out of great and imminent troubles, be much in doxology and praise. Deliverance calls for praise, Psal. xxx. 11, 12. ‘ Thou hast put off my sackcloth ; and girded me with gladness : to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee.’ My glory, that is, my tongue, which is the instrument of glorifying thee. The saints are temples of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. iii. 16. Where should God’s praises be founded but in his temple? *Beneficium postulat effcium* : the deepest springs yield the sweetest water ; and hearts deeply sensible of God’s deliverances yield the sweetest praises. Moses tells Pharaoh, when he was going out of Egypt, ‘ We will go with our sheep and cattle,’ Exod. x. 9. Why so, because he might have sacrifices of thanksgiving ready to offer to God for their deliverance. To have a thankful heart for deliverance is a greater blessing than the deliverance itself, Luke xvii. 15. One of the lepers, ‘ when he saw he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God.’ The leper’s thankful heart was a greater blessing than to be healed of his leprosy : have any of you here been brought out of the house of bondage : out of prison, sickness, or any death-threatening danger ? do not forget to be thankful : be not graves, but temples. And, that you may be more thankful, observe every emphasis and circumstance in your deliverance ; as to be brought out of trouble when you were *in articulo mortis*, there was but an hair’s-breadth between you and death ; or to be brought out of affliction, without sin, you did not purchase your deliverance by the ensnaring of your consciences ; or, to be brought out of trouble upon the wings of prayer ; or, that those who were the occasions of bringing you into trouble, should be the instruments of bringing you out : these circumstances, being well weighed, do heighten a deliverance, and should heighten our thankfulness. The cutting of a stone may be of more value than the stone itself ; and the circumstancing of a deliverance may be greater than the deliverance itself.

Qu. 2. *But how shall we praise God in a right manner for deliverance ?*

*Ans.* 1. Be holy persons. In the sacrifice of thanksgiving, whosoever did eat thereof, with their uncleanness upon them,

were to be cut off, Lev. vii. 20. to typify how displeasing their praises and thank-offerings are who live in sin.

2. Praise God with humble hearts, acknowledge how unworthy you were of deliverance; God's mercies are not debts, but legacies; and that you should have a legacy given you, be humble, Rev. xi. 16. 'The elders fell upon their faces (an expression of humility) and worshipped and praised God.'

3. Praise God for deliverances cordially, Psal. cxi. 1. 'I will praise the Lord with my whole heart.' In religion there is no music but in concert, when heart and tongue join.

4. Praise God for deliverances constantly, Psal. cxlvi. 2. 'While I live will I bless the Lord:' some will be thankful while the memory of a deliverance is fresh, and then they leave off. Like the Carthaginians, who used at first to send the tenth of their yearly revenue to Hercules: but by degrees they grew weary, and left off sending. But we must be constant in our eucharistical sacrifice or thank-offering: the motion of our praise must be like the motion of our pulse, which beats as long as life lasts, Psal. cxlvi. 1. 'I will sing praises to my God while I have a being.'

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#### EXOD. xx. 2. *Out of the House of Bondage.*

*Secondly*, THESE words are to be understood mystically and spiritually. By Israel's deliverance from the house of bondage, is typified their spiritual deliverance from sin, Satan and hell.

I. *from sin.*] The house of bondage was a type of Israel's deliverance from sin. Sin is the true bondage, it enslaves the soul, *Nihil durias servitute*, Cicero. "Of all conditions, servitude is the worst." "I was held before conversion (saith Austin) not with an iron chain, but with the obstinacy of mine own will." Sin is the enslaver: sin is called a law, Rom. vii. 23. because it hath such a binding power over a man; and it is said to reign, Rom. vi. 12. because it exerciseth a tyrannical power: and men are said to be the servants of sin, Rom. vi. 17. because they are so enslaved by it. Thus sin is the house of bondage Israel was not so enslaved in the iron furnace, as the sinner is by sin: those are worse slaves and vassals who are under the power of sin, than those who are under the power of earthly tyrants.

1. Other slaves have the tyrants only ruling over their bodies; but the sinner hath his soul tyrannized over; the soul, that princely thing, which sways the sceptre of reason, and was once crowned with perfect knowledge and holiness, now this

prince goes on foot ; it is enslaved, and made a lackey to every base lust.

2. Other slaves have some pity shewn them ; the tyrant gives them meat, and lets them have hours for their rest ; but sin is a merciless tyrant, it will let men have no rest. Judas had no rest until he had betrayed Christ ; and after that, he had less rest in his conscience. How doth a man hackney himself out in the service of sin, waste his body, break his sleep, distract his mind ? a wicked man is every day doing sin's drudgery-work.

3. Other slaves, tho' they are set about servile work, yet about lawful : it is lawful to work in the galley, tug at the oar ; but all the laws and commands of sin are unlawful. Sin saith to one man, defraud ; to another, be unchaste ; to another, take revenge ; to another, take a false oath, ' Thus all sin's commands are unlawful ; we cannot obey sin's law, but by breaking God's law.

4. Other slaves are forced against their will ; Israel groaned under slavery, *Exod. ii. 23.* but sinners are content to be under the command of sin ; they are willing to be slaves, they love their chains, they will not take their freedom ; they ' glory in their shame,' *Phil. iii. 19.* They wear their sins, not as their fetters, but their ornaments : they rejoice in iniquity, *Jer. xi. 15.*

5. Other slaves are brought to correction, but sin's slaves are, without repentance, brought to condemnation : other slaves lie in the iron furnace, sin's slaves lie in the fiery furnace. What freedom of will hath a sinner to his own confusion, when he can do nothing but what sin will have him ? he is enslaved. Thus sinners are in the house of bondage ; but God takes his elect out of this house of bondage : he beats off the chains and fetters of sin ; he rescues them from their slavery ; he makes them free, by bringing them into the glorious liberty of the children of God, *Rom. viii.* The law of love now commands, not the law of sin. Though the life of sin be prolonged, yet not the dominion : as those beasts in Daniel had their lives prolonged for a season, but their dominion was taken away, *Dan. vii. 12.* The saints are made spiritual kings, to rule and conquer their corruptions, to ' bind these kings in chains.' This is the matter of the highest praise and thanksgiving, to be thus taken out of the house of bondage, to be freed from enslaving lusts, and made kings to reign in glory for ever.

II. The bringing Israel out of the house of bondage, was a type of their deliverance from Satan. Thus men naturally are in the house of bondage, they are enslaved to Satan : Satan is called the prince of this world, *John xiv. 30.* and the god of this world, *2 Cor. iv. 4.* because he hath such power to com-



mand and enslave them. Though Satan shall one day be a close prisoner in chains, yet now he doth insult and tyrannize over the souls of men ; sinners are under the rule of Satan, he exerciseth over them such a jurisdiction as Cæsar did over the senate. The devil fills men's heads with error, and their hearts with malice, Acts v. 3. ' Why hath Satan filled thine heart ? ' A sinner's heart is the devil's mansion-house, Matth. xii. 44. ' I will return into mine house. ' And sure that must needs be an house of bondage, which is the devil's mansion-house. Satan is a perfect tyrant : 1. He rules men's minds, he blinds them with ignorance, 2 Cor. iv. 4. ' The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not. ' 2. He rules their memories ; they shall remember that which is evil, and forget that which is good : their memories are like a sencer or strainer, that lets go all the pure liquor, and returns only the dregs. He rules their wills : tho' the devil cannot force the will yet he draws it, John viii. 44. The lusts of your father you will do. ' He hath got your hearts, and him you will obey : his strong temptations do more draw men to evil, than all the promises of God can draw them to good. This is the state of every man by nature, he is in the house of bondage, the devil hath him in his power : a sinner grinds in the devil's mill ; he is at the command of Satan, as the ass is at the command of the driver. No wonder to see men oppress and persecute ; these slaves must do what the god of this world will have them : how could those swine but run, when the devil entered into them ? Matth. viii. 32. When the devil tempted Ananias to tell a lie, he could not but speak what Satan had put in his heart, Acts v. 3. When the devil entered into Judas, and bid him betray Christ, Judas would do it, though he hanged himself. This case is sad and dismal, to be thus in the house of bondage, under the power and tyranny of Satan. When David would curse the enemies of God, how did he pray against them ? That Satan might be at their right-hand, Ps. cix. 6. He knew he could lead them into any snare : if Satan be at the sinner's right-hand, let the sinner take heed he be not set on God's left-hand. Is not this a case to be bewailed, to see men taken captive by Satan at his will ? 2 Tim. ii. 26. he leads sinners as slaves before him in triumph ; he possesseth them. If people should see but their beasts bewitched and possesseth of the devil, they would be much troubled ; yet their souls are possessed by Satan, but they are not sensible. [What can be worse than to be in the house of bondage, to have the devil hurry men on in their lust to perdition ?] Sinners are willingly enslaved to Satan ; they love their goaler ; are content to sit disquietly under Satan's jurisdiction ; they chuse this bramble to rule them, tho', within a while, fire will come out of this bramble to devour them, Judges ix. Now, what an infinite mercy of God is

it, when he brings poor souls out of this house of bondage, when he gives them a goal-delivery from the prince of darkness ! JESUS CHRIST redeems captives, he ransoms sinners by price, and rescues them by force : as David took a lamb out of the lion's mouth, 1 Sam. xvii. 34. So Christ rescues souls out of the mouth of this roaring lion. O what a mercy is it to be brought out of the house of bondage, to be taken from being made captives to the prince of the power of the air, and to be made subjects of the Prince of peace ! And this is done by the preaching of the word, Acts xxvi. 18. ' To turn them from the power of Satan unto God.'

III. The bringing of Israel out of the house of bondage, was a type of their being delivered from hell. Hell is *domus servitutis*, an house of bondage ; an house built on purpose for sinners to lie in.

1. That there is such an house of bondage where the damned lie, Ps. ix. 17. ' The wicked shall be turned into hell.' Mat. xxiii. 33. ' How can ye escape the damnation of hell ?' If any one shall ask where this house of bondage is, where is the place of hell ? I wish you may never know feelingly. " Let us not so much (saith Chrysostom) labour to know where hell is, as how to escape it." Yet, to satisfy curiosity, hell is *locus subterraneus*, some place beneath, Prov. v. 24. ' Hell beneath.' Hesiod saith, ' Hell is as far under the earth, as heaven is above it,' Luke viii. 31. ' The devils besought Christ that he would not command them to go into the deep.' Hell is in the deep.

2. Qu. *Why there must be this house of bondage ? why a hell ?*

Ans. Because there must be a place for the execution of divine justice ; earthly monarchs have their prison for malefactors, and shall not God have his ; sinners are criminal persons, they have offended God ; and it would not consist with God's holiness and justice, to have his laws infringed, and not appoint penalties for the transgressors.

3. The dreadfulneſs of this place. Could you but for one hour hear the groans and shrieks of the damned, it would confirm you in this truth, that hell is an house of bondage : hell is the emphasis of misery. Besides the *pœna damni*, the punishment of loss, which is the exclusion of the soul from the glorified sight of God, which divines think the worst part of hell ; I say, besides this, there will be *pœna sensus*, the punishment of sense. If, when God's wrath is kindled but a little, and a spark of it flies into a man's conscience in this life, it is so terrible (as in the case of Spira) then what will hell itself be ? That I may describe this house of bondage,

1. In hell there will be a plurality of torments, 1. Bonds and chains, 2 Pet. ii. 4. 2. The worm, Mark ix. 44. this is the

worm of conscience : and the lake of fire, Rev. xx. 15. other fire is but painted to this.

2. This house of hell is haunted with devils, Matth. xxv. 41. Anselm hath a saying, "I had rather endure all torments, than see the devil with bodily eyes." Such as go to hell must not only be forced to behold the devil, but must be shut up in the den with this lion ; they must keep the devil company : the devil is full of spite against mankind ; this red dragon will spit fire in men's faces.

3. The torments of hell abide for ever, Rev. xiv. 11. 'The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever,' Mark ix. 44. Time cannot finish it, tears cannot quench it : the wicked are salamanders ; who live always in the fire of hell, and are not consumed : after sinners have lain millions of years in hell, their punishment is as far from ending, as it was at the beginning. If all the earth and sea were sand, and every thousandth year a bird should come, and take away one grain of this sand, it would be a long time ere that vast heap of sand were emptied ; yet, if after all that time the damned might come out of hell, there were some home hope ; but this word EVER breaks the heart.

Qu. *But how doth this seem to stand with God's justice, for a sin committed in a moment, to punish it with eternal torment ?*

Ans. 1. Because there is an eternity of sin in man's nature. 2. Because sin is *crimen læsæ majestatis*, it is committed against an infinite majesty ; therefore the sin is infinite, and proportionably the punishment must be infinite. Now, because a finite creature cannot bear infinite wrath, therefore he must be eternally satisfying what he cannot satisfy at once. Now then, if hell be such an house of bondage, what infinite cause have they to bless God, who are delivered from it ? 1 Thess. i. 20. 'Jesus delivered us from the wrath to come.' Jesus Christ suffered the torments of hell in his soul, that believers should not suffer them. If we are thankful, when we are ransomed out of prison, or delivered from fire, O how should we bless God to be preserved from the wrath to come ! And that which may cause the more thankfulness, is because the most part go into this house of bondage, the most part go to hell : therefore to be of the number of these few that are delivered from it, it is matter of infinite thankfulness. I say, most go to this house of bondage when they die ; most go to hell, Matth. vii. 13. 'Broad is the way which leadeth unto destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.' The greatest part of the world lies in wickedness, 1 John v. 19. Divide the world, saith Brerewood, into thirty-one parts, nineteen parts of it are possessed by Jews and Turks, seven parts by Heathens ; so that there are but five parts of Christians, and among these Christians so many seduced Papists



on the one hand, and so many formal Protestants on the other, that we may conclude the major part of the world goes to hell. 1. The scripture compares the wicked to briers, Isa. x. 17. There are but few lilies in your fields, but in every hedge thorns and briers. 2. To 'the mire in the streets,' Isa. x. 6. Few jewels or precious stones in the street, but you cannot go a step but you meet with mire. The wicked are as common as the dirt in the street: look into the generality of people, how many drunkards for one that is sober? how many adulterers for one that is chaste? how many hypocrites for one that is sincere? The devil hath the harvest, and God only a few gleanings. Oh then, such as are delivered from the house of bondage, hell, have infinite cause to admire and bless God. How should the vessels of mercy run over with thankfulness? when most are carried prisoners to hell, they are delivered from wrath to come.

*Qu. How shall I know I am delivered from hell?*

*Ans.* 1. Those whom Christ saves from hell, he saves from sin, Matth. i. 21. 'He shall save his people from their sins.' Hath God delivered you from the power of corruption, from pride, malice, lust? if he hath delivered you from the hell of sin, then he hath delivered you from the hell of torment.

2. If you have got an interest in Christ, prizing, confiding, loving him, then you are delivered from hell and damnation, Rom. viii. 1. 'No condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' If you are in Christ, then he hath put the garment of his righteousness over you, and hell-fire can never singe this garment. Pliny observes, nothing will so soon quench fire as salt and blood: the salt tears of repentance and the blood of Christ will quench the fire of hell, that it shall never kindle upon you.

## OF THE COMMANDMENTS.

EXOD. xx. 3. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me, &c.*

BEFORE I come to the commandment, I shall premise some things about the moral law: viz. answer questions, and lay down rules.

*Qu. 1. What is the difference between the moral law and the gospel?*

*Ans.* 1. The law requires that we worship God as our Creator: the gospel requires that we worship God in and through Christ. God in Christ is propitious: out of Christ we may see God's power, justice, holiness; in Christ we see his mercy displayed.

2. The moral law requires obedience, but gives no strength

(as Pharaoh required brick, but gave no straw) but the gospel gives strength; the gospel bestows faith upon the elect, the gospel sweetens the law, it makes us serve God with delight.

*Qu. 2. Of what use then is the moral law to us?*

*Ans.* The law is a glass to shew us our sins, that so, seeing our pollution and misery, we may be forced to flee to Christ to satisfy for former guilt, and save from future wrath, Gal. ii. 24. 'The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.'

*Qu. 3. But is the moral law still in force to believers? is it not abolished to them?*

*Ans.* In some sense it is abolished to believers. 1. In respect of justification; they are not justified by their obedience to the moral law. Believers are to make great use of the moral law (as I shall shew) but they must trust only to Christ's righteousness for justification; as Noah's dove made use of her wings to fly, but trusted to the ark for safety. If the moral law could justify, what need were there of Christ's dying? 2. The moral law is abolished to believers, in respect of the malediction of it: they are freed from the curse and damnatory power of it, Gal. iii. 13. 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.'

*Qu. 4. How was Christ made a curse for us?*

*Ans.* Christ may be considered, 1. As the Son of God, and so he was not made a curse. 2. As our pledge and surety, Heb. vii. 22. and so he was made a curse for us: this curse was not upon his Godhead, but upon his manhood. This curse was the wrath of God lying upon him; and thus Christ hath taken away from believers the curse of the law, by being made a curse for them. But tho' the moral law is thus far abolished, yet it remains as a perpetual rule to believers: though the moral law be not their Saviour, yet it is their guide: though it be not *fœdus*, a covenant of life; yet it is *norma*, a rule of living: every Christian is bound to conform to the moral law; and write, as exactly as he can, after this copy, Rom. iii. 31. 'Do we then make void the law through faith, God forbid.' Though a Christian is not under the condemning power of the law, yet he is under the commanding power; to love God, to reverence and obey him, this is a law always binds, and will bind in heaven. This I urge against the Antinomians, who say, the moral law is abrogated to believers; which, as it contradicts scripture, so it is a key to open the door to all licentiousness. They who will not have the law to rule them, shall never have the gospel to save them. Having answered these questions, I shall in the next place, lay down some general rules for the right understanding of the Decalogue, or Ten commandments: these rules may serve to give us some light into the sense and meaning of the commandments.

*Rule 1.* The commands and prohibitions of the moral law reach the heart.

1. The commands of the moral law reach the heart; the commandments require not only outward actions but inward affections; they require not only the outward act of obedience, but the inward affection of love, Deut. vi. 5. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart.'

2. The threats and prohibitions of the moral law reach the heart; the law of God forbids not only the act of sin, but the desire and inclination; not only doth it forbid adultery, but lusting, Matth. v. 28. Not only stealing, but coveting, Rom. vii. 7. *Lex humana ligat manum, lex divina comprimet animam*: man's law binds only the hands, God's law binds the heart.

*Rule 2.* In the commandments there is a *synechdoche*, more is intended than is spoken. 1. Where any duty is commanded, there the contrary sin is forbidden, &c. When we are commanded to keep the sabbath-day holy, there we are forbidden to break the sabbath: when we are commanded to live in a calling, 'Six days shalt thou labour,' there we are forbidden to live idly, and out of a calling. 2. Where any sin is forbidden, there the contrary duty is commanded: when we are forbidden to take God's name in vain, the contrary duty is commanded, that we should reverence his name, Deut. xxviii. 58. 'That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God.' Where we are forbidden to wrong our neighbour, there is the contrary duty included, that we should do him all the good we can, by vindicating his name, and supplying his wants.

*Rule 3.* Where any sin is forbidden in the commandment, there the occasion of it is also forbidden. Where murder is forbidden, there envy and rash anger are forbidden, which may occasion it. Where adultery is forbidden in the commandment, there is forbidden all that may lead to it, as wanton glances of the eye, or coming into the company of an harlot, Prov. v. 8. 'Come not nigh the door of her house:' he who would be free from the plague, must not come near the infected house. Under the law the Nazarite was forbidden to drink wine; nor might he eat grapes of which the wine was made.

*Rule 4.* *In relato subintelligitur correlatam.* Where one relation is named in the commandment, there another relation is included. Where the child is named, there the father is included: where there is the duty of children to parents mentioned, there is included also the duty of parents and children: where the child is commanded to honour the parent, there is implied that the parent is also commanded to instruct, to love, to provide for the child.

*Rule 5.* Where greater sins are forbidden, there lesser sins are also forbidden. Though no sin in its own nature is little,



yet comparatively one may be less than another: where idolatry is forbidden, there is forbidden superstition, of bringing any innovation into God's worship, which he hath not appointed. As the sons of Aaron were forbidden to worship an idol, so to sacrifice to God with strange fire, Lev. x. 1. Mixture in sacred things, is like a dash in the wine, which though it gives it a colour, yet doth but debase and adulterate it. It is highly provoking to God, to bring any superstitious ceremony into his worship, which he hath not prescribed; it is to tax God's wisdom, as if he were not wise enough to appoint the manner how he will be served.

*Rule 6.* The law of God is copulative; *Lex est copulativa*: the first and second tables are knit together; piety to God, and equity to our neighbour: these two tables, which God hath joined together, must not be put asunder. Try a moral man by the duties of the first table, piety to God, and there you will find him negligent; try an hypocrite by the duties of the second table, equity to his neighbour, and there you will find him tardy. He who is strict in the second table, but neglects the first, or he who is zealous in the first table, but neglects the second, his heart is not right with God. The Pharisees were the highest pretenders to the first table, zeal and holiness: but Christ detects their hypocrisy, Matth. xxiii. 23. 'Ye have omitted judgment, mercy and faith.' They were bad in the second table; they omitted judgment, that was, being just in their dealing; mercy, in relieving the poor; and faith, that is faithfulness in their promises and contracts with men. God wrote both the tables, and our obedience must set a seal to both.

*Rule 7.* God's law forbids not only the acting of sin in our own persons, but being accessary to, or having any hand in the sins of others.

*Qu. How and in what sense may we be said to partake of, and have an hand in the sins of others?*

*Ans. 1.* By decreeing unrighteous decrees, and imposing on others that which is unlawful. Jeroboam made the people of Israel to sin: he was accessary to their idolatry, by setting up golden calves: so David, though he did not in his own person kill Uriah, yet because he wrote a letter to Joab, to set Uriah on the fore-front of the battle, and it was done by his command, therefore he was accessary to Uriah's death, and the murder of him was laid to David's charge by the prophet, 2 Sam. xii. 9. 'Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword.'

*2.* We become accessary to the sins of others by not hindering them when it is in our power, *Qui non prohibet cum potest, peccat*. If a master of a family see his servant break the sabbath, or let him swear, and let him alone, doth not use the power he hath to suppress him, he becomes accessary to his sin. Eli,

for not punishing his sons when they made the offering of the Lord to be abhorred, made himself guilty, 1 Sam. iii. 14. He that suffers an offender to pass unpunished, makes himself an offender.

3. By counselling, abetting, or provoking others to sin. Ahithophel made himself guilty of the fact, by giving counsel to Absalom to go in and defile his father's concubines, 2 Sam. xvi. 21. He who shall tempt or solicit another to be drunk though himself be sober, yet being the occasion of another's sin, he is accessory to it, Hab. ii. 15. 'Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him.'

4. By consenting to another's sin; Saul did not cast one stone at Stephen, yet the scripture saith, 'Saul was consenting to his death,' Acts viii. 1. Thus he had a hand in it. If several did combine to murder a man, and they should tell another of their intent, and he should give his consent to it, he were guilty: though his hand were not in the murder, yet his heart was in it: though he did not act it, yet he did approve it, so it became his sin.

3. By example, *vivitur exemplis*. Examples are powerful and cogent; setting a bad example occasions another to sin; and so a person becomes accessory. If the father swears, and the child by his example, learn to swear, the father is accessory to the child's sin; he taught him by his example. As there are diseases hereditary, so there are sins.

*Rule 8.* The last rule about the commandments, is this, that though we cannot, by our own strength, fulfil all these commandments, yet doing, *quoad posse*, what we are able, the Lord hath provided encouragement for us. There is a threefold encouragement.

1. That though we have not ability to obey any one command, yet God hath, in the new covenant, promised to work that in us, which he requires, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. 'I will cause you to walk in my statutes.' God commands us to love him: alas, how weak is our love! it is like the herb that is not only in the first degree; but God hath promised to circumcise our hearts, that we shall love him, Deut. xxx. 6. He that doth command us, will enable us. God commands us to turn from sin, but alas! we have not power to turn; therefore God hath promised to turn us, to put his Spirit within us, and turn the heart of stone into flesh, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. There is nothing in the command, but the same is in the promise. Therefore, Christian, be not discouraged tho' thou hast no strength of thy own, yet God will give thee this strength. The iron hath no power to move, but when the loadstone draws it, it can move, Isa. xxvi. 12. 'Thou hast wrought all our works in us.'

2. Though we cannot exactly fulfil the moral law, yet God

will, for Christ's sake, mitigate the rigour of the law, and accept of something less than he requires. God in the law requires exact obedience, yet he will accept of sincere obedience: he will abate something of the degree, if there be truth in the inward parts; God will see the faith, and pass by the failing; the gospel remits something of the severity of the moral law.

3. Wherein our personal obedience comes short, God will be pleased to accept us in our surety, Eph. i. 6. 'He hath accepted us in his beloved.' Though our obedience be imperfect, yet, through Christ our surety, God looks upon it as perfect. And that very service which God's law might condemn, God's mercy is pleased to crown, by virtue of the blood of our Mediator. Having given you these rules about the commandments, I shall come next to the direct handling of them.

## OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. xx. 3. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me*

Qu. XLV. *WHY doth the commandment run in the second person singular, Thou? why doth not God say, You shall have no other gods, but, Thou?*

Ans. Because the commandment concerns every one, and God would have you take it as spoken to you by name. Though we are forward to take privileges to ourselves, yet we are apt to shift off duty from ourselves to others: therefore the commandment runs in the second person, *Thou* and *Thou*, that every one may know that the commandment is spoken to him, as it were, by name. And so I come to the commandment, '*Thou shalt have no other gods before me:*' this commandment may well lead the van, and be set in the front of all the commandments, because it is the foundation of all true religion. The sum of this commandment is, that we should sanctify God in our hearts, and give him a precedency above all created beings. There are two branches of this commandment: 1. That we must have one God. 2. That we must have but one. Or thus, (1.) That we must have God for our God. (2.) That we must have no other. 1. That we must have God for our God: it is manifest that we must have a God, and 'who is God save the Lord?' 2 Sam. xxii. 32. The Lord Jehovah (one God in three persons) is the true, living, eternal God; and him must we have for our God.

Qu. 1. *What is it to make God to be a God to us?*

Ans. 1. To make God to be a God to us, is to acknowledge



him for a God : the gods of the heathens are idols, Pſal. xcvi. 5. and we ‘ know that an idol is nothing,’ 1 Cor. viii. 4. that is, it hath nothing of deity in it : if we cry, *Help, O Idol*, an idol cannot help ; the idols were themſelves carried into captivity, Iſa. xlv. 2. ſo that an idol is nothing ; vanity is aſcribed to it, Jer. xiv. 22. we do not acknowledge it to be a God. But this is to make God to be a God to us, when we do, *ex animo*, acknowledge him to be God, 1 Kings xviii. 39. All [the] people fell on their faces, and ſaid, ‘ The Lord he is the God ! the Lord he is the God !’ Yea, we acknowledge God to be the only God, 2 Kings xix. 15. ‘ O Lord God of Iſrael which dwelleſt between the Cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone.’ Deity is a jewel that belongs only to his crown. Yet further, we acknowledge that there is no God like him, 1 Kings viii. 22, 23. ‘ And Solomon ſtood before the altar of the Lord ; and he ſaid, Lord God of Iſrael, there is no god like thee.’ Pſal. lxxxix. 6. ‘ For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord ? who among the ſons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord.’ In the Chaldee it is, Who among the angels ; None can do as God : he brought the world out of nothing ? ‘ And hangeth the earth upon nothing,’ Job xxvi. 7. This is to make God to be a God to us, when we are perſuaded in our hearts, and confeſs with our tongues, and ſubſcribe with our hand, that God is the only true God, and that there is none comparable to him.

2. To make God to be a God to us, is to chooſe him, Joſh. xxiv. 15. ‘ Chooſe ye this day whom you will ſerve ; but as for me and my houſe we will ſerve the Lord :’ that is, we will chooſe the Lord to be our God. It is one thing for the judgment to approve of God, and another for the will to chooſe him. Religion is not a matter of chance, but choice.

Qu. *What is antecedent to, or goes before this choice ?*

Anſ. 1. Before this chooſing God for our God, there muſt be knowledge : we muſt know God, before we can chooſe him ; before one chuſe the perſon he will marry, he muſt firſt have ſome knowledge and cognizance of the perſon : ſo we muſt know God, before we can chooſe him for our God, 2 Chron. xxviii. 9. ‘ Know thou the God of thy father.’ We muſt know God in his attributes, glorious in holineſs, rich in mercy, faithful in promiſes. We muſt know God in his ſon : as in a glaſs a face is repreſented, ſo in Chriſt, as in a transparent glaſs, we ſee God’s beauty and love ſhine forth. This knowledge muſt go before our chooſing of God. Laſtantius ſaid, all the learning of the philoſophers was without a head, becauſe it wanted the knowledge of God. 2. Wherein our chooſing of God conſiſts : it is an act of mature deliberation ; a Chriſtian having viewed the ſuperlative excellencies in God, and being

stricken into an holy admiration of his perfections, he singles out God from all other objects to set his heart upon : he saith as Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 21. ' The Lord shall be my God.' 3. The effect of choosing God : the soul that chooseth God, devotes himself to God, Psal. cxix. 38. ' Thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.' As the vessels of the sanctuary were consecrated and set apart from common to holy uses ; so the soul who hath chosen God to be his God, hath dedicated and set himself apart for God, and will be no more for profane uses.

3. To make God to be a God to us, is to enter into solemn covenant with him, that he shall be our God : after choice follows the marriage-covenant. As God makes a covenant with us, Isa. liii. 3. ' I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David : ' so we make a covenant with him, 2 Chron. xv. 12. ' They entered into covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers.' And Isa. xlv. 5. ' One shall say, I am the Lord's : and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord ; ' like soldiers, that subscribe their names in the muster roll. This covenant, ' That God shall be our God,' we have often renewed in the Lord's supper : and it is like a seal to a bond, to bind us fast to God, and to keep us that we do not depart from him.

4. To make God to be a God to us, is to give him adoration ; which consists, 1. In reverencing of him, Ps. lxxxix. 7. ' God is to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.' The Seraphims, who stood about God's throne covered their faces, Isa. vi. And Elijah wrapt himself in a mantle, when the Lord passed by, in token of reverence. This reverence shews the high esteem we have of God's sacred Majesty. 2. Adoration is in bowing to him, or worshipping him, Ps. xxix. 2. ' Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.' Neh. viii. 6. ' They bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.' Divine worship is the peculiar honour belonging to the Godhead : this God is jealous of, and will have no creature share in, Isa. xlii. 8. ' My glory will I not give to another.' Magistrates may have a civil respect or veneration, God only a religious adoration.

5. To make God to be a God to us, is to fear him, Deut. xxviii. 58. ' That thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God.' This fearing of God is, (1.) To have God always in our eye, Ps. xvi. 8. ' I have set the Lord always before me.' And Ps. xxv. 15. ' Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord.' He who fears God, imagines, that whatever he is doing, God looks on, and, as a judge, weighs all his actions. (2.) To fear God, is, when we have such an holy awe of God upon our hearts, that we dare not sin, Ps. iv. 4. ' Stand in awe and sin not.' The wicked sin and fear not ; the godly fear

and sin not, Gen. xxxix. 9. 'How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' bid me sin, bid me drink poison. It is a saying of Anselm, "If hell were on one side, and sin on the other, I would rather leap into hell, than willingly sin against my God." 1. This glorious and fearful name: he who fears God will not sin, though it be never so secret, Lev. xix. 14. 'Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God.' Suppose you should curse a deaf man, he cannot hear you curse him: or if you lay a block in a blind man's way, and make him fall, he cannot see you lay it: ay, but the fear of God will make you forsake these sins which can neither be heard nor seen by men. 2. Where the fear of God is, it destroyes the fear of man: the three children feared God, therefore they feared not the king's wrath, Dan. iii. 16. The greater noise drowns the less; the noise of thunder drowns the noise of a river? so when the fear of God is superintendent in the soul, it drowns all other carnal fear. This is to make God to be a God to us, when we have an holy filial fear of him; *That thou mayest fear.*

6. To make God to be a God to us, is to trust in him, Psal. cxli. 8. 'Mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord: in thee will I trust.' 2 Sam. xxii. 3. 'The God of my rock, in him will I trust.' There is nothing we can trust in but God; all the creatures are a refuge of lies; they are like the Egyptian reed, too weak to support us, but strong enough to wound us. *Omnis motus fit super immobili.* God only is a sufficient foundation to build our trust upon; and then when we trust, we make him a God to us, else we make him an idol, if we do not trust in him. Trusting in God, is when we rely on his power as a Creator, and on his love as a Father. Trusting in God, is, when we commit our chief treasure to him: our soul is our chief treasure, we commit our soul to him, Ps. xxxi. 5. 'Into thy hands I commit my spirit.' As the orphan trusts his estate with his guardian, so we trust our souls with God: this is to make him a God to us.

Q. 1. *How shall we know that we trust in God aright?*

Ans. If we trust in God aright, then we will trust in God at one time as well as another, Ps. lxii. 8. 'Trust in him at all times.' Can we trust God, 1. In our straits? when the fig-tree doth not flourish, when our earthly crutches are broken, can we now lean upon God's promise? when the pipes are cut off that used to bring us comfort, can we live upon God, in whom are all our fresh springs? when we have no bread to eat but the bread of carefulness, Ezek. xix. 8. when we have no water to drink unless tears, Ps. lxxx. 5. 'Thou gavest them tears to drink in great measure;' Can we now trust in God's providence, to make supply for us; A good Christian believes, that



if God feed the ravens, he will feed his children : he lives upon God's all-sufficiency, not only for grace, but food ; he believes if God will give him heaven, he will give daily bread : he trusts God's bond, Psal. lxxvii. 3. ' Verily thou shalt be fed.' 2. Can we trust God in our fears ? fear is the age of the soul. When adversaries begin to grow high, can we now display the banner of faith ? Psal. lvi. 3. ' What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.' Faith cures the trembling at the heart : faith gets above fear, as the oil swims above the water. This is to trust in God, and it is to make him to be a God to us.

7. To make God to be a God to us, is to love him ; in the godly, fear and love kiss each other.

8. To make him a God to us, is to obey him : but I forbear to speak of these, because I shall be large upon them in the second commandment : ' Shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.'

*Q. Why must we cleave to the Lord as our God ?*

*Ans.* 1 From the equity of it : it is but equal we should cleave to him as our God, from whom we receive our being ; who can have a better right to us than he that gives us our breath ? Ps. c. 3. ' For it is he that made us, and not we ourselves.' It is unequal, yea ungrateful, to give away our love or worship to any but God.

2. From the utility. If we cleave to the Lord as our God ; then (1.) He will bless us, Ps. lxxvii. 6. ' God, even our own God, will bless us.' He will bless us, 1. In our estate, Deut. xxviii. 4, 5. ' Blessed shall be the fruit of thy ground : blessed shall be thy basket and thy store ;' we shall not only have our sack full of corn, but it shall be blessed ; here is money in the mouth of the sack. (2.) He will bless us with peace, Ps. xxix. 11. The Lord will bless his people with peace : ' outward peace, which is the nurse of plenty, Ps. cxlvii. 14. ' He maketh peace in thy borders ; inward peace, a smiling conscience ; this is sweeter than the dropping honey. (3.) God will turn all evils to our good, Rom. viii. 28. He will make a treacle of poison. Joseph's imprisonment was a means for his advancement, Gen. l. 20. Out of the bitterest drug, God will distil his glory and our salvation. In short God will be our guide to death, our comfort in death, our reward after death. So then the utility of it may make us cleave to the Lord as our God, Ps. cxliv. 15. ' Happy is that people who have the Lord for their God.'

1. From the necessity, 1<sup>st</sup>, If God be not our God, he will curse our blessings ; Mal. ii. 2. and God's curse blasts wherever it comes. 2<sup>dly</sup>, If God be not our God, we have none to help us in misery : will God help his enemies ? will he assist them who disclaim him ? 3<sup>dly</sup>, If we do not make God to be our

God, he will make himself to be our judge; and if he condemns, there is no appealing to a higher court. So that, there is a necessity of having God for our God, unless we intend to be eternally espoused to misery.

*Use 1.* If we must have one God, and the Lord Jehovah for our God, it condemns the Atheists who have no God, Pl. xiv. 1. 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' There is no God he believes in, or worships: such Atheists were Diagoras and Theodorus. When Seneca had reprov'd Nero for his impieties, said Nero, 'Dost thou think I believe there is any God, when I do such things?' The duke of Silesia was so infatuated, That he affirmed, *Neque inferos neque superos esse*; that there was neither God nor devil. We may see God in the works of his fingers. The creation is a great volume, in which we may read a Godhead; and he must needs put out his own eyes that denies a God. Aristotle, tho' an heathen, did not only acknowledge God, when he cried out, "Thou Being of Beings, have mercy on me;" but he thought, he that did not confess a Deity was not worthy to live. They who will not believe a God, shall feel him. Heb. x. 31. 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'

*Use 2.* It condemns Christians, who profess to own God for their God, yet they do not live as if he were their God. (1.) They do not believe in him as a God: when they look upon their sins, they are apt to say can God pardon? when they look upon their wants, can God provide? can he prepare a table in the wilderness? (2.) They do not love him as a God: they do not give him the cream of their love, but are apt to love other things more than God; they say, they love God, but will part with nothing for him. (3.) They do not worship him as a God: they do not give him that reverence, nor pray with that devotion, as if they were praying to a God. How dead are their hearts? if not dead in sin, yet dead in duty: 'tis as if praying to a god that hath eyes and sees not; ears and hears not: in hearing the word, how much distraction, what regardless hearts have many? they are thinking of their shop and drugs. Would a king take it well at our hands, if, when he is speaking to us, we should be playing with a feather? when God is a speaking to us in his word, and our hearts are taken up with thoughts about the world, is not this playing with a feather? O how may this humble most of us, we do not make God to be a God to us! We do not believe in him, love him, worship him as a God. Many heathens have worshipped their false gods with more seriousness and devotion, than some Christians do the true God. O let us chide ourselves; did I say chide? let us abhor ourselves for our deadness and formality in religion, how we have professed God, yet we have not worshipped him as God.

So much for the first, 'We must have God for our God.' I should come to the second, 'We must have no other God.'

EXOD. XX. 3. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

1. THAT we must have 'no other god;' 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me.'

Qu. *What is meant by this word, Before me?*

Ans. That is before my face; in *conspedtu meo*, in my sight, Deut. xxvii. 15. 'Curfed be he that makes a graven image, and puts it in a secret place.' Some would not bow to the idol that others might see, but they would secretly bow to it; but though this was out of man's sight, it was not out of God's sight; 'Curfed therefore (saith God) be he that puts the image in a secret place.' 'Thou shalt have no other gods.' 1. There is really no other God. 2. We must have no other.

(1.) *There is really no other God.* The Valentinians held there were two gods; the Polytheites that there were many; the Persians worshipped the sun; the Egyptians the ox and elephant; the Grecians Jupiter; but there is no other than the true God, Deut. iv. 39. 'Know therefore, this day, and consider it in thy heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is no other.' For, 1. There is but one *First Cause*, that hath its being of itself, and on which all others beings depend; as in the heavens the *Primum Mobile* moves all the other orbs, so God is the *Great Mover*, he gives life and motion to every thing existent.

2. There is but one *Omnipotent power*. If there be two Omnipotents, then we must always suppose a contest between these two; that which one would do, the other Power, being equal, would oppose; and so all things would be brought into a confusion. If a ship should have too pilots of equal power, one would be ever crossing the other; when one would sail, the other would cast anchor; here were a confusion, and the ship must needs perish. The order and harmony in the world, the constant and uniform government of all things, is a clear argument that there is but one Omnipotent, one God, that rules all, Isa. xlv. 6. 'I am the First, and I am the Last, and besides me there is no God.'

(2.) *We must have no other God.* 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me;' this commandment forbids, (1.) Serving a false god, and not the true, Jer. ii. 27. 'Saying to a stock, thou art my father; and to a stone, thou hast brought me forth.' Or, (2.) Joining a false god with a true, 2 Kings xviii. 33. 'They feared the Lord, and served their own gods; both these



are forbidden in the commandment ; we must adhere to the true God, and no other? God is a jealous God,' and he will endure no corival. A wife cannot lawfully have two husbands at once ; nor may we have two gods, Exod. xxxiv. 14. ' Thou shalt worship no other God, for the Lord is a jealous God.' Psal. xvi. 4. ' Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god.' The Lord interprets it a ' Forsaking of him,' to espouse any other god, Judges ii. 12. ' They forsook the Lord, and followed other gods.' God would not have his people so much as make mention of idol-gods, Exod. xxiii. 13. ' Make no mention of the names of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.' God looks upon it as a breaking of the marriage-covenant, to go after other gods. Therefore, when Israel committed idolatry with the golden calf, God disclaims his interest in them, Exod. xxxii. 7. ' Thy people have corrupted themselves.' Before, God called Israel his people ; but when they went after other gods, ' Now (saith the Lord to Moses) they are no more my people but thy people.' Hos. ii. 2. ' Plead with your mother, plead ; for she is not my wife.' She doth not keep faith with me ; she hath stained herself with idols, therefore I will divorce her ; ' she is not my wife.' To go after other gods, is what God cannot bear ; it makes the fury rise up in his face, Deut. xiii. 6, 8, 9. ' If thy brother, or thy son, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, let us go and serve other gods : thou shalt not consent unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him.' But thou shalt surely kill him ; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

*Qu. But what is it to have other gods besides the true God? I fear, upon search, we have more idolaters among us than we are aware of.*

*Ans.* To trust in any thing more than God, is to make it a god. 1. If we trust in our riches, then we make riches our god : we may take comfort, not put confidence in them. It is a foolish thing to trust in them. (1.) They are deceitful riches, Matth. xiii. 2. and it is foolish to trust to that which will deceive us. 1<sup>st</sup>, They have no solid consistency, they are like land-skips or golden dreams, which leave the soul empty when it awakes or comes to itself. 2<sup>dly</sup>, They are not what they promise ; they promise to satisfy our desires, and they increase them ; they promise to stay with us, and they take wings. (2.) They are hurtful, Eccl. i. 13. ' Riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.' It is foolish to trust to that which will hurt one : who would take hold of the edge of a razor to help him? they are oft fuel for pride and lust, Ezek. xxviii. 5. Jer. v. 7. So that it is folly to trust in our riches ; but some do,

and so make money their god, Prov. x. 15. 'The rich man's wealth is his strong tower.' He makes the wedge of gold his hope, Job xxxi. 24. God made man of the dust of the earth, and man makes a god of the dust of the earth. Money is his creator, redeemer, comforter : his creator ; if he had money, now he thinks he is made : his redeemer ; if he be in danger, he trusts to his money to redeem him : his comforter ; if he be sad, money is the golden harp to drive away the evil spirit. Thus, by trusting to money, we make it a god.

2. If we trust in the arm of flesh, we make it a god, Jer. xvii. 5. 'Curfed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.' The Syrians trusted in their army, which was so numerous, that it filled the country, 1 Kings xx. 27. but this arm of flesh withered, *verse* 29. What we make our trust, God makes our shame. The sheep run to the hedges for shelter, and they lose their wool ; we have run to second causes to help us, and we have lost much of our golden fleece ; they have not only been reeds to fail us, but thorns to prick us. We have broken our parliament-crutches, by leaning too hard upon them.

3. If we trust in our wisdom, we make it a god. Jer. ix. 23. 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom.' Glorifying is the height of confidence. Many a man doth make an idol of his wit and parts ; he defiles himself, but how oft doth God take the wise in their own craftiness, Job vi. 13. Ahithophel had a great wit, his counsel was the oracle of God ; but his wit brought him to the halter, 2 Sam. xvii. 23.

4. If we trust in our civility, we make it a god : many trust to this, none can charge them with gross sin. Civility is but nature refined and cultivated ; a man may be washed, and not changed ; his life may be civil, yet there may be some reigning sin in his heart : the Pharisee could say, 'I am no adulterer,' Luke xviii. 11. but he could not say, 'I am not proud,' To trust to civility, is to trust to a spider's web.

5. If we trust to our duties to save us, we make them a god, Isa. lxiv. 6. 'Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags :' they are fly-blown with sin. Put gold in the fire, and there comes out much dross ; our most golden duties are mixed with infirmity : we are apt either to neglect duty, or idolize it. Use duty, but do not trust to it ; for then you make it a god. Trust not to your praying and hearing these are the means of salvation, but they are not saviours. If you make duties bladders to trust to, you may sink to hell with these bladders.

6. If we trust in our grace, we make a god of it. Grace is but a creature ; if we trust to it, we make it an idol. Grace is imperfect, we cannot trust to that to save us which is imperfect, Psal. xxvi. 1. 'I have walked in my integrity : I have trusted also in the Lord.' David did walk in his integrity ; but did

not trust in his integrity; 'I have trusted in the Lord.' If we trust in our graces, we make a Christ of them. They are good graces but bad Christs. To love any thing more than God, is to make it a god.

1<sup>st</sup>, If we love our estate more than God, then we make it a god. The young man in the gospel loved his gold better than his Saviour; the world lay nearer his heart than Christ, Matth. xix. 22. *Fulgens hoc aurum præstringit oculos*, Var. Hence it is, the covetous man is called an idolater, Eph. v. 5. Why so? Because he loves his estate more than God, and so he makes it his god: tho' he doth not bow down to an idol, yet he worships the graven image in his coins; he is an idolater. That which hath most of the heart, that we make a god.

2<sup>dly</sup>, If we love our pleasures more than God, we make a god of pleasure, 2 Tim. iii. 4. 'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.' Many let loose the reins, and give themselves up to all manner of sensual delights; they idolize pleasure, Job xxi. 12, 13. 'They take the timbrel, and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in mirth.' I have read of a place in Africa, where the people spend all their time in dancing, and making merry: and have not we many who make a god of pleasure, who spend their time in going to plays, and visiting stewes, as if God had made them like the leviathan, to play in the water? Psal. civ. 26. In the country of Sardinia there is an herb like balm, that if one eat too much of it, he will die laughing; such an herb is pleasure; if one feeds immoderately on it, he will go laughing to hell. Such as make a god of pleasure, let them read but two scriptures, Eccl. vii. 4. 'The heart of fools is in the house of mirth.' And, Rev. xviii. 7. 'How much she hath lived deliciously, so much torment give her.' Sugar laid in a damp place turns to water; so all the sugared joys and pleasures of sinners will turn to the water of tears at last.

3<sup>dly</sup>, If we love our belly more than God, we make a god of it, Phil. iii. 19. 'Whose god is their belly.' Clemens Alexandrinus writes of a fish that had its heart in its belly: an emblem of epicures, their heart is in their belly; they do *sacrificare lari*, their belly is their god, and to this god they pour drink-offerings. The Lord allows what is fitting for the recruit of nature, Deut. xi. 15. 'I will send grass, that thou mayest eat and be full.' But, to mind nothing but the indulging of the appetite, is idolatry; 'Whose god is their belly.' What pity is it, that the soul, that princely part, which sways the sceptre of reason, and is a-kin to angels, should be enslaved to the brutish part.

4<sup>thly</sup>, If we love a child more than God, we make a god of it. How many are guilty in this kind! they think of their



children, and delight more in them than in God ; they grieve more for the loss of their first born, therefore the loss of their first love. This is to make an idol of a child, and to set it in God's room. Thus God is oft provoked to take away our children : if we love the jewel more than him that gave it, God will take away the jewel, that our love may return to him again.

*Uſe 1.* It reproves such as have other gods, and so renounce the true God. (1.) Such as set up idols, Jer. ii. 28. 'According to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Israel.' Hof. xii. 11. 'Their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the field.' (2.) Such as seek to familiar spirits. This is a sin condemned by the law of God, Deut. xviii. 11. 'There shall not be found among you any that consult with familiar spirits.' It is ordinary, that if people have lost any of their goods, they send to wizards and soothsayers, to know how they may come by their goods again ; what is this but for people to make a god of the devil, by consulting with him, and putting their trust in him ? what ? because you have lost your goods, will you lose your souls too ? 2 Kings i. 6. So, is it not because you think there is not a God in heaven, that you ask counsel of the devil ? If any be guilty, be humbled.

*Uſe 2.* It sounds a retreat in our ears. Let it call us off from the idolizing any creature ; and renouncing other gods, let us cleave to the true God and his service. If we go away from God, we know not where to mend ourselves.

1. It is honourable serving of the true God ; *Servire Deo est regnare*. It is more honour to serve God, than to have kings serve us. 2. Serving the true God is delightful, Isa. lvi. 7. 'I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.' God oft displays the banner of his love in an ordinance, and pours in the oil of gladness into the heart. All God's ways are pleasantness, his paths are strewed with roses, Prov. iii. 17. 3. Serving the true God is beneficial : they have great gain here, the hidden manna, inward peace, and a great reward to come : they that serve God shall have a kingdom when they die, Luke xii. 32. and shall wear a crown made of the flowers of paradise, 1 Pet. v. 4. To serve the true God is our true interest. God hath twisted his glory and our salvation together : he bids us believe ; and why ? that we may be saved. Therefore, renouncing all others, let us cleave to the true God.

2. You have covenanted to serve the true JEHOVAH, renouncing all others. When one hath entered into covenant with his master, and the indentures are drawn and sealed, then he cannot go back, but must serve out his time. We have covenanted in baptism, to take the Lord for our God, renouncing all others ; and renewed this covenant in the Lord's supper, and shall we

not keep our solemn vow and covenant? we cannot go away from God without the highest perjury, Heb. x. 38. 'If any man draw back,' as a soldier that steals away from his colours, 'my soul shall have no pleasure in him; I will pour vials of wrath on him, and make mine arrows drunk with blood.'

3. None ever had cause to repent of cleaving to God and his service: some have repented that they have made a god of the world. Cardinal Wolfsey said, "Had I served my God as faithfully as I have served my king, he would never have left me thus." None ever complained of serving God, it was both their comfort and crown on their death-bed.

## OF THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 4. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, &c.*

IN the first commandment is forbidden the worshipping a false god; in this, the worshipping the true God in a false manner.

1. 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.' This forbids not the making an image for civil use, Mat. xxii. 20. 'Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, It is Cæsar's.' But the commandment forbids setting up an image for religious use or worship.

2. 'Nor the likeness of any thing,' &c. All ideas, portraiture, shapes, images of God, whether by effigies or pictures, are here forbidden, Deut. iv. 15. 'Take heed lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make the similitude of any figure.' God is to be adored in the heart, not painted to the eye.

3. 'Thou shalt not bow down to them.' The intent of making images and pictures, is to worship them. No sooner was Nebuchadnezzar's golden image set up, but all the people fell down and worshipped it, Dan. iii. 7. Therefore God forbids the prostrating of ourselves before an idol; so then, the thing prohibited in this commandment is image-worship. To set up an image to represent God, is a debasing of the Deity, it is below God. If one should make images of snakes or spiders, saying he did it to represent his prince, would not the prince take this in high disdain? what greater disparagement to God, than to represent the infinite God by that which is finite: the living God, by that which is without life, and the Maker of all, by a thing which is made?

1. To make a true image of God is impossible. God is a spiritual essence, John iv. 24. and, being a Spirit, he is invisi-

ble, Deut. iv. 15. 'Ye saw no similitude in the day that the Lord spake with you out of the midst of the fire.' How can any paint the Deity? can they make an image of that which they never saw? *Quod invisibile est, pingi, non protest*, Amb. "Ye saw no similitude." It is impossible to make a picture of the soul, or to paint the angels, because they are of a spiritual nature; much less then can we paint God by an image, who is an infinite, uncreated Spirit.

2. To worship God by an image, is both absurd and unlawful.

I. It is absurd and irrational; for, 1. The workman is better than the work, Heb. iii. 3. 'He who buildeth the house hath more honour than the house.' If the workman be better than the work, and none bow to the workman, how absurd then is it to bow to the work of his hands? 2. Is it not an absurd thing to bow down to the king's picture, when the king himself is present? so to bow down to an image of God, when God himself is every-where present.

II. It is unlawful to worship God by an image; for, 1. It is against the homily of the church; it runs thus; 'The images of God, our Saviour, the Virgin Mary, are of all others the most dangerous; therefore the greatest care ought to be had, that they stand not in temples and churches.' So that image-worship is contrary to our own homilies, and doth affront the authority of the church of England. 2. Image-worship is expressly against the letter of scripture, Lev. xxvi. 1. 'Ye shall make no graven image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone, to bow down to it,' Deut. xvi. 22. 'Neither shalt thou set up any image which the Lord thy God hateth.' Psal. xcvi. 7. 'Confounded be all they that serve graven images.' Do we think to please God, by doing that which is contrary to his mind, and that which he hath expressly forbidden? 3. Image-worship is against the practice of the saints of old. Josiah, that renowned king, destroyed the groves and images, 2 Kings xxiii. 24. Constantine abrogated the images set up in temples: the Christians destroyed images at Basil, Zurich, Bohemia; when the Roman emperors would have thrust images upon them, they chose rather to die than deflower their virgin-profession by idolatry; they refused to admit any painter or carver into their society, because they would not have any carved statue or image of God: when Seraphion bowed to an idol, the Christians excommunicated him, and delivered him up to Satan.

Use 1. It reproves and condemns the church of Rome, who, from the Alpha of their religion to the Omega, are wholly idolatrous. They make images of God the Father, painting him in their church windows as an old man; and an image of Christ in the crucifix: and, because it is against the letter of this com-



mandment, therefore they sacrilegiously blot out the second commandment out of their catechises, dividing the tenth commandment into two; now this image-worship must needs be very impious and blasphemous, because it is a giving that religious worship to the creature, which is only due to God. It is vain for papists to say, they give God the worship of the heart, and the image only the worship of the body; for the worship of the body is due to God, as well as the worship of the heart: and to give an outward veneration to an image, is to give that adoration to a creature, which only belongs to God, Isa. xlii. 8. ‘ My glory will I not give to another.’

Object. 1. *But the papists say, they do not worship the image, only make use of it as a medium, they worship God by it; Ne imagine quidem Christi in quantum est lignum sculptum, ultra debetor reverentia, Aquinas.*

Ans. 1. Where hath God bidden them worship him by an effigy or spirit? Isa. i. 12. ‘ Who hath required this at your hands?’ The papists cannot say so much as the devil, *Scriptum est*, It is written.

2. The heathens may bring the same argument for their gross idolatry, as the papists do for their image-worship. Who of the heathens were so simple, as to think of gold and silver, or the figure of an ox or elephant, were God? They were only emblems and hieroglyphics to represent him; they did worship the invisible God, by such visible things. To worship God by an image, God takes as done to the image itself.

Object. 2. *But, say the papists, images are lay-men’s books, and they are good to put us in mind of God. One of the popish councils affirmed, that we might learn more by an image, than by a long study of the scriptures.*

Ans. Hab. ii. 18. ‘ What profiteth the graven image, the molten image, and a teacher of lies?’ Is an image a lay-man’s book? See then what lessons this book teacheth; it teacheth lies; it represents God in a visible shape, who is invisible. For the papists to say, they make use of an image to put them in mind of God, is as if a woman should say, she keeps company with another man, to put her in mind of her husband.

Object. 3. *But did not Moses make the image of a brazen serpent? Why then may not images be set up?*

Ans. That was done by God’s special command, Numb. xxi. 8. ‘ Make thee a brazen serpent;’ and there was a special use of it, both literal and spiritual; but what, doth the setting up this image of the brazen serpent justify the setting up of images in churches? what, because Moses did make an image by God’s appointment, may we therefore set up an image of our own devising? because Moses made an image to heal them that were stung, is it lawful therefore to set up images in churches,

to sling them that are whole ? this doth not at all follow. Nay, that very brazen serpent which God himself commanded to be set up, when Israel did look upon it with too much reverence, and began to burn incense to it, Hezekiah defaced that image, and called it, Nehushtan ; and God commended him for so doing, 2 Kings xviii. 4.

*Object. 4. But is not God represented as having hands, and eyes, and ears ? Why then may we not make an image to represent him by, and help our devotion.*

*Ans.* Though God is pleased to stoop to our weak capacities, and set himself out in scripture by eyes, to signify his omniscien-  
cy ; and hands to signify his power ; yet it is very absurd, from metaphors and figurative expressions, to bring an argument for images and pictures ; for, by that rule, God may be pictured by the sun and the element of fire, and by a rock ; for God is set forth by these metaphors in scripture : and sure the papists themselves would not like to have such images made of God.

*Qu. 1. If it be not lawful to make the image of God the Father, yet may we not make an image of Christ, who took upon him the nature of man ?*

*Ans.* No. Epiphanius seeing an image of Christ hanging in a church, brake it in pieces, it is Christ's Godhead, united to his manhood, that makes him to be Christ : therefore, to picture his manhood, when we cannot picture his Godhead, is a sin, because we make him to be but half Christ, we separate what God hath joined, we leave out that which is the chief thing, which makes him to be Christ.

*Qu. 2. But how then shall we conceive of God aright, if we may make no image or resemblance of him ?*

*Ans.* We must conceive of God spiritually, viz. 1. In his attributes, his holiness, justice, goodness, which are the beams by which his divine nature shines forth. 2. We must conceive of him as he is in Christ, Christ is the ' image of the invisible God,' Col. i. 15. as in the wax we see the print of the seal. Set the eyes of your faith on Christ God-man, John xiv. 9. ' He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.'

*Use 2.* Take heed of idolatry, viz. image-worship : our nature is prone to this sin, as dry wood to take fire ; and indeed, what needs so many words in the commandment, ' Thou shalt not make any graven image, or the likeness of any thing in heaven, earth, water,' sun, moon, stars, male, female fish ; ' thou shalt not bow down to them : ' I say, what needed so many words, but shew how subject we are to this sin of false worship ? it concerns us therefore to resist this sin. Where the tide is apt to run with greater force, there we had need to make the banks higher and stronger, the plague of idolatry is very infectious, Psal. cvi. 35, 36. ' They were mingled among the heathens,

and served their idols.' It is my advice to you to avoid all occasions of this sin.

1. Come not into the company of idolatrous papists, dare not to live under the same roof with them: you run into the devil's mouth. John the divine would not be in the bath where Cerinthus the heretic was.

2. Go not into their chapels to see their crucifixes, or hear mass: as the looking on an harlot draws to idolatry, so the looking on the popish gilded picture may draw to idolatry. Some care not though they go and see their idol-worship: indeed, a vagrant that hath nothing to lose, cares not though he goes among thieves; such as have no goodness in them, care not into what idolatrous places they come, or what temptations they cast themselves upon: but you who have a treasure about you, good principles, take heed the popish priests do not rob you of your principles, and defile you with their images.

3. Dare not to join in marriage with image-worshippers. Solomon, tho' a man of wisdom, yet his idolatrous wives drew away his heart from God. The people of Israel entered into an oath and curse, that they would not give their daughters in marriage to the idolaters, Nehem. x. 30. For a protestant and papist to marry, is to be unequally yoked, 2 Cor. vi. 14. and there is more danger that the papist will corrupt the protestant, than hope that the protestant will convert the papist. Mingle wine and vinegar, the vinegar will sooner sour the wine, than the wine will sweeten the vinegar.

4. Avoid superstition, which is a bridge leads over to Rome. Superstition is the bringing in any ceremony, fancy, or innovation into God's worship, which he never appointed. This is very provoking to God, because it reflects much upon his honour, as if he were not wise enough to appoint the manner of his own worship. God hates all strange fire to be offered in his temple, Lev. x. 1. A ceremony may in time bring to a crucifix. They who contend for the cross in baptism, why may they not as well have the oil, salt, and cream, the one being as ancient as the other? such as are for altar-worship, they who will bow to the east, may in time bow to the host. Take heed of all occasions of idolatry; idolatry is devilish-worship, Psal. cvi. 37. and if you search through the whole bible, there is no one sin that God hath more followed with plagues, than idolatry; the Jews have a saying, that in every evil that befalls them there is *uncia aurei vituli*, an ounce of the golden calf in it. Hell is a place for idolaters, Rev. xxii. 15. 'For without are idolaters.' Senefius calls the devil a rejoicer at idols, because the image-worshippers help to fill hell. That you may be preserved from idolatry and image-worship.

1. Get good principles, that you may be able to oppose the



gainfayer. Whence doth the popifh religion get ground? not from the goodnefs of their caufe, but from the ignorance of their people.

2. Get love to God. The wife that loves her husband is fafe from the idolater; and the foul that loves Chrift is fafe from the idolater.

3. Pray that God will keep you. Tho' it is true, there is nothing in an image to tempt (for if we pray to an image, it cannot hear, and if we pray to God by an image, he will not hear: I fay, there's nothing to tempt) yet we know not our own hearts, or how foon we may be drawn to vanity, if God leaves us: therefore pray that you be not enticed by falfe worship, or receive the mark of the beaft in your right hand or forehead, Pray, Pf. cxix. 117. 'Hold thou me up, and I fhall be fafe.' Lord, let me neither miftake my way for want of light, nor leave the true way for want of courage.

2. Let us blefs God, who hath given us the knowledge of his truth; that we have tafted the honey of his word, and our eyes are enlightened. Blefs him that he hath fhewn us the pattern of his houfe, the right mode of worship; that he hath difcovered to us the forgery and blafphemy of the Romifh religion. Let us pray, that God will preferve pure ordinances, and powerful preaching among us: idolatry came in at firft by the want of good preaching; then the people began to have golden images, when they had wooden priefts.

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EXOD. xx. 5. *For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, vifiting the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children unto the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me.*

I. 'I THE Lord thy God am a jealous God.' The firft reason why Ifrael muft not worship graven images, is, becaufe the Lord is a jealous God, Exod. xxxiv. 14. 'The Lord whole name is *Jehovah*, is a jealous God.' Jealoufy is taken in a good fenfe, and fo God is jealous for his people. 2. In a bad fenfe, and fo God is jealous of his people.

1. In a good fenfe, and fo God is jealous for his people, Zech. i. 14. 'Thus faith the Lord I am jealous for Jerufalem, and for Zion, with a great jealoufy.' God hath a dear affection for his people, they are his *Hephzibah*, or delight, Ifa. lxii. 4. The apple of his eye, Zech. ii. 8. To exprefs how dear they are to him, and how tender he is of them, *Nihil charius pupilla oculi*, Drufius. They are his fpoufe, adorned with jewels of grace; they lie near to his heart. He is jealous for his fpoufe, therefore he will be avenged on them who go to

wrong her, Isa. xliii. 13. 'The Lord shall stir up jealousy like a man of war; he shall roar, he shall prevail against his enemies.' What is done to the saints, God takes as done to himself, 2 Kings xix. 22. and the Lord will undo all them that afflict Zion, Zeph. iii. 19. 'I will undo all that afflict thee.' 2. Jealousy is taken in a bad sense, and so God is jealous of his people: and so it is taken in this commandment, 'I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.' I am jealous lest you should go after false gods, or worship the true God in a false manner; lest you defile your virgin-profession by images. God will have his spouse to keep close to him, and not go after other lovers, Hos. iii. 3. 'Thou shalt not be for another man.' God cannot bear a corival: our conjugal love, viz. a love joined with adoration and worship, must be given only to God.

*Use 1.* Let us give God no just cause to be jealous. A good wife will be so discreet and chaste, as to give her husband no just occasion of jealousy. Let us avoid all sin, especially this sin of idolatry, or image-worship; it is heinous, after we have entered into a marriage-covenant with God, now to prostitute ourselves to an image. Idolatry is spiritual adultery, and God is a jealous God, he will avenge it: image-worship makes God abhor a people, Psal. lxxviii. 58. 'They moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel.' Image-worship enrageth God, Prov. vi. 34. 'Jealousy is the rage of a man;' it makes God divorce a people, Hos. ii. 2. 'Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not my wife.' Cant. viii. 6. 'Jealousy is cruel as the grave.' As the grave devours men's bodies, so God will devour image-worshippers.

*Use 2.* If God be a jealous God, let it be a word to such whose friends are popish idolaters, and they are hated by their friends, because they are of a different religion, and perhaps they cut off their maintenance from them. O remember, God is a jealous God; better move your parents to hatred, than move God to jealousy; their anger cannot do you so much hurt as God's; if they will not provide for you, God will, Psal. xxvii. 10. 'When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.'

II. The second reason against image-worship, 'Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.' There is a twofold visiting. 1. There is God's visiting in mercy, Gen. i. 25. 'God will surely visit you;' that is he will bring you into the land of Canaan, the type of heaven. Thus God hath visited us with the sun-beams of his favour; he hath made us swim in a sea of mercy; this is an happy visitation. 2. There is God's visiting in anger, Jer. v. 9. 'Shall I not visit for these things?' that is, God's visiting with the rod: and,

Iſa. x. 3. 'What will ye do in the day of viſitation?' that is, in the day when God ſhall viſit with his judgments. Thus God's viſiting is taken here, in this commandment, 'viſiting iniquity,' that is, puniſhing iniquity. Obſerve here three things:

*Obſerve 1.* That ſin makes God viſit; 'Viſiting iniquity.' Sin is the cauſe why God viſits with ſickneſs, poverty, Pſal. lxxxix. 31, 32. 'If they break my commandments; then will I viſit their tranſgreſſions with the rod.' Sin twiſts the cords which pinch us; ſin creates all our troubles, it is the gall in our cup, and the gravel in our bread; *Flagitium et flagellum, ſunt ſcutus acus et filium*. Sin is the Trojan horſe, the phæton, that ſets all on fire; it is the womb of our ſorrows, and the grave of our comfort. God viſits for ſin.

*Obſerve 2.* One ſpecial ſin God viſits for, is idolatry and image worſhip. 'Viſiting the iniquity of the fathers.' Moſt of God's invenomed arrows have been ſhot among idolaters, Jer. vii. 12. 'Go now into my place which was in Shiloh, where I ſet my name at the firſt, and ſee what I did to it.' God, for Iſrael's idolatry ſuffered their army to be routed, their prieſts ſlain, the ark taken captive; and we never read that the ark returned to Shiloh any more. Jeruſalem was the moſt famous metropolis of the world; there was the temple, Pſal. cxxii. 4. 'Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord.' Yet, for their high places and images, their city was beſieged, and taken by the Chaldean forces, 2 Kings xxv. 4. When images were ſet up in Conſtantinople, the chief ſeat of the Eaſtern empire: this city, which was in the eye of the world impregnable, was taken by the Turks, and many cruelly maſſacred. Then the Turks, in their triumphs, reproached the idolatrous Chriſtians, cauſing an image or crucifix to be carried through the ſtreets in contempt, and throwing dirt upon it cried, "This is the god of the Chriſtians." Here was God's viſitation for their idolatry. God hath ſet ſpecial marks of his wrath upon idolaters: at a place called Eſepoleum, there periſhed by an earthquake 350 perſons, while they were offering ſacrifice to idols. Idolatry hath brought miſery upon the Eaſtern churches, it removed the golden candleſticks of Aſia. This iniquity God viſits for.

*Obſerve 3.* Idolatrous perſons are enemies not only to their own ſouls, but to their children: 'Viſiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children.' As an idolatrous father entails his land of inheritance, ſo he entails God's anger and curſe upon them. A jealous huſband, finding his wife hath ſtained her integrity, may juſtly caſt her off and her children too, becauſe they are none of his. If the father be a traitor to his prince, no wonder if all the children ſuffer. God may viſit the iniquity of image-worſhippers upon their children.



Qu. *But is it not said, 'Every one shall die for his own sin; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father?' How then doth God say, He 'will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children?'*

Ans. Tho' the son be not damned for his father's sin, yet he may be severely punished, Job xxi. 19. 'God lays up his iniquity for his children;' that is, God lays up the punishment of his iniquity for his children; the child smarts for the father's sin. Jeroboam thought to have established the kingdom by idolatrous worship, but it brought ruin upon him, and all his posterity, 1 Kings xiv. 10. Ahab's idolatry wronged his posterity, they lost the kingdom, and were all beheaded, 2 Kings x. 7. 'They took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons.' There God visited the iniquity of the father upon the children. As a son catcheth an hereditary disease from his father, the stone or gout; so he catcheth misery from him, his father's sin ruins him.

Use 1. If so, then how sad is it to be the child of an idolater? It had been sad to have been one of Gehazi's children, who had leprosy entailed upon them, 2 Kings v. 27. 'The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to thee and to thy seed for ever.' So it is sad to be a child of an idolater, or image-worshipper: his seed are exposed to God's heavy judgments in this life; 'God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon their children.' Methinks I hear God speak, as, Isa. xiv. 21. 'Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers.'

Use 2. See what a privilege it is to be the children of good parents; the parents are in covenant with God, and God lays up mercy for their posterity, Prov. xx. 7. 'The just man walks in his integrity, his seed are blessed after him.' A religious parent doth not procure wrath, but helps to keep off wrath from his child; he seasons his child with religious principles, he prays down a blessing on his child: he is a loadstone drawing his child to Christ by good counsel and example. O what a privilege is it to be born of godly religious parents! St. Austin saith, that his mother Monica travelled with greater care and pains for his new birth, than for his natural. Wicked idolaters entail misery on their posterity, God 'visits the iniquity of the fathers upon their children:' but religious parents procure a blessing upon their children, God reserves mercy upon their posterity.

III. The third reason against image-worship, *Of them that hate me.* This is a reason against image-worship, 'tis hating God; the papists, who worship God by an image, hate God. Image-worship is a pretended love to God, but God interprets it an hating of him: *Quæ diligit alienum odit sponsum;* She that loves another man, hates her own husband. An image-

lover is a God-hater. Idolaters are said to go a-whoring from God, Ezek. xxxiv. 15. How can they love God? I shall shew that image-worshippers hate God, whatever love they pretend.

1. They who go contrary to God's exprefs will, hate him. God saith, you shall not set up any statue, image nor picture, to represent me; these things I hate, Deut. xvi. 22. 'Neither shalt thou set up any image which the Lord thy God hateth.' Yet the idolater will set up images, and worship them. This God looks upon as an hating of him. How doth that child love his father, who doth all he can to cross him?

2. They who shut the truth out of doors, hate him, because they laboured to shut him out of his father's house, Judges xi. 7. The idolater shuts the truth out of doors; he blots out the second commandment; he makes a shape of the invisible God; he brings a lie into God's worship: which is a clear proof he hates God.

3. Idolaters, tho' they love the false image of God in a picture, yet they hate the true image of God in a believer: they pretend to honour Christ in a crucifix, yet persecute Christ in his members; these hate God.

*Use 1.* This may confute those who plead for image-worshippers. They are very devout people, they adore images, they set up the crucifix, kiss it, light candles to it: they love God. Nay, but who shall be judge of their love? God saith, they hate him: they give religious adoration to a creature. These hate God, and God hates them; and they shall never live with God, whom God hates: he will never lay such vipers in his bosom; heaven is kept as paradise, with a flaming sword, that they shall not enter in: and Deut. vii. 10. 'He repayeth them that hate him, to their face.' God will shoot all his murdering-pieces among idolaters: all the plagues and curses in the book of God shall beset the idolater: the Lord repays him that hates him to his face.

*Use 2.* Let it exhort us all to flee from Romish idolatry: let us not be among God-haters, 1 John v. 21. 'Little children keep yourselves from idols.' As you would keep your bodies from adultery, so keep your souls from idolatry. Take heed of images, they are images of jealousy to provoke God to anger; they are damnable: you may as well perish by false devotion, as by real scandal; by image-worship, as drunkenness and whoredom. A man may as well die by poison, as pistol: we may as well go to hell by drinking poison in the Romish cup of fornication, as by being pistoled with gross and scandalous sins. To conclude, 'God is a jealous God,' who will admit of no corrival; 'he will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon their children:' he will entail a plague upon the posterity of idolaters.

He interprets idolaters to be such as hate him; he that is an image-lover, is a God-hater: Therefore keep yourselves pure from Romish idolatry; if you love your souls, keep yourselves from idols.

EXOD. XX. 6. *Shewing Mercy unto Thousands, &c.*

THIS is another argument against image-worship, because such as do not provoke God with their images, he is merciful to them, and will entail mercy upon their posterity; 'shewing mercy to thousands.'

1. Here is the golden sceptre of God's mercy displayed. 2. The persons interested in God's mercy; such as love him, and keep his commandments. 1. The golden sceptre of God's mercy displayed, 'shewing mercy to thousands.' The heathens thought they praised Jupiter enough, when they called him good and great. Both these excellencies meet in God, majesty and mercy. Mercy is that innate propenseness in God to do good to distressed sinners. God shewing mercy, makes his Godhead appear full of glory. When Moses said to God, 'I beseech thee shew me thy glory; I will (saith God) shew mercy,' Exod. xxxiii. 19. His mercy is his glory. Mercy is the name by which God will be known, Exod. xxxiv. 6. 'The Lord passed by, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious.' Mercy proceeds primarily, and originally from God; he is called, the 'Father of mercies,' 2 Cor. i. 3. because he begets all those mercies and bowels which are in the creature. Our mercies compared with God's, are scarce so much as a drop to the ocean.

Qu. *What are the qualifications?*

Ans. 1. The spring of mercy which God shews, is free and spontaneous. To set up merit is to destroy mercy: nothing can deserve mercy nor force it; we cannot deserve mercy because of our enmity, nor force it: we may force God to punish us, not to love us, Hos. xiv. 3. 'I will love them freely.' Every link in the golden chain of salvation is wrought and interwoven with free grace. Election is free, Eph. i. 4. 'He hath chosen us in him according to the good pleasure of his will.' Justification is free, Rom. iii. 24. 'Being justified freely by his grace.' Say not then, I am unworthy; for mercy is free. If God should shew mercy only to such as deserve it, he must shew mercy to none at all.

2. The mercy God shews is powerful: how powerful is that mercy, which softens an heart of stone? Mercy changed Mary Magdalen's heart, out of whom seven devils were cast: she who



was an inflexible adamant, mercy made her a weeping penitent. God's mercy works sweetly, yet irresistably ; it allures, yet conquers. The law may terrify, mercy doth mollify. Of what sovereign power and efficacy is that mercy which subdues the pride and enmity of the heart, and beats off those chains of sin in which the soul is held !

3. The mercy which God shews is super-abundant, Exod. xxxiv. 6. ' Abundant in goodness, shewing mercy to thousands.' God visits iniquity only to the third and fourth generation, Exod. xx. 5. but he shews mercy to a thousand generations. The Lord hath treasures of mercy lying by, therefore he is said to be ' plenteous in mercy,' Psal. lxxxvi. 5. and ' rich in mercy,' Eph. ii. 4. The vial of God's wrath doth but drop, but the fountain of his mercy runs. The sun is not so full of light, as God is of love.

God hath mercy, *First*, Of all dimensions ; he hath depth of mercy, it reacheth as low as sinners ; and height of mercy, it reacheth above the clouds.

*Secondly*, God hath mercies for all seasons : mercies for the night, he gives sleep ; nay, sometimes he gives a song in the night, Psal. xlii. 8. And he hath mercies for the morning, Lam. iii. 3. ' His compassions are fresh every morning.'

*Thirdly*, God hath mercies for all sorts. Mercies for the poor, 1 Sam. ii. 8. ' He raiseth the poor out of the dust ;' mercies for the prisoner, Psal. lxi. 33. ' He despiseth not his prisoners :' Mercies for the dejected, Isa. liv. 8. ' In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee.' God hath old mercies, Psal. xxv. 6. ' Thy mercies have been ever of old :' and new mercies, Psal. xl. 3. ' He hath put a new song in my mouth.' Every time we draw our breath, we suck in mercy : God hath mercies under heaven, and those we taste of ; and mercies in heaven, and those we hope for. Thus God's mercies are super-abundant.

4. The mercy God shews is abiding, Ps. ciii. 16. ' The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.' God's anger to his children lasts but a while, Ps. ciii. 9. but his mercy lasts for ever. God's mercy is not like the widow's oil, which ran a while and then ceased, 2 Kings iv. 6. Overflowing, ever flowing. God's mercy, as it is without bounds, so without bottom, Ps. cxxxvi. ' His mercy endures for ever.' God never cuts off the entail of mercy from the elect.

Qu. 2. *How many ways is God said to shew mercy ?*

Ans. 1. We are all living monuments of God's mercy. God shews mercy to us in daily supplying us. 1. He supplies us with health : health is the sauce which makes our life relish sweeter. How would they prize this mercy, who are chained to a sick-bed ? 2. God supplies us with provisions, Gen. xlviii.

15. 'The God who hath fed me all my days.' Mercy spreads our tables, it carves us every bit of bread we eat; we never drink but in the golden cup of mercy.

2. God shews mercy in lengthening out our gospel-liberties, 1 Cor. xvi. 9. There are many adversaries; many would stop the waters of the sanctuary, that they should not run: we enjoy the sweet seasons of grace, we hear joyful sounds, we see the goings of God in his sanctuary, we enjoy sabbath after sabbath; the manna of the word yet falls about our tents, when in divers parts of the land they have no manna. Here is God shewing mercy to us; he spins out our forfeited liberties.

3. God shews mercy to us, in preventing many evils from invading us, Ps. iii. 3. 'Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me.' God hath restrained the wrath of men, and been a screen between us and danger: when the destroying angel hath been abroad, and shot his deadly arrow of pestilence, God hath kept off the arrow that it hath not come near us.

4. God shews mercy in delivering us, 2 Tim. iv. 17. 'And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.' viz. Nero. God hath restored us from the grave. May we not write the writing of Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 9. 'When he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness?' When we thought the sun of our life had been setting, God hath made it return to its former brightness.

5. God shews mercy, in restraining us from sin: lusts within, are worse than lions without. The greatest sign of God's anger, is to give men up to their sins, Psal. lxxxvi. 12. 'So I gave them up to the lusts of their own hearts;' let them sin themselves to hell: but God hath laid the bridle of restraining grace upon us. As God said to Abimelech, Gen. xx. 6. 'I withheld thee from sinning against me;' so God withheld us from those exorbitancies which might have made us a prey to Satan, and a terror to ourselves.

6. God shews mercy, in guiding and directing us. Is it not a mercy for one that is out of the way to have a guide? *First*, There is a providential guiding: God guides our affairs for us, chalks out a way he would have us to walk in; he resolves our doubts, unties our knots, appoints the bounds of our habitation, Acts xvii. 26. *Secondly*, A spiritual guiding, Psal. lxxiii. 24. 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel.' As Israel had a pillar of fire to go before them, so God guides us with the oracles of his word, and the conduct of his Spirit. He guides our head, keeps us from error; and he guides our feet, keeps us from scandal. O what mercy is it to have God to be our guide and pilot! Psal. xxxi. 3. 'For thy name's sake lead me and guide me.'

7. God shews mercy in correcting us. God is angry in love ; he finit'es that he may save. God's rod is not a rod of iron to break us, but a fatherly rod to humble us, Heb. xii. 10. ' He, for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.' Either God will mortify some corruption, or exercise some grace. Is there not mercy in this? Every cross, to a child of God, is like Paul's cross wind, which, tho' it broke the ship, it brought Paul to shore upon the broken pieces, Acts xxvii. 44.

8. God shews mercy in pardoning us, Mic. vii. 18. ' Who is a god like thee, that pardonest iniquity?' 'Tis mercy to feed us, rich mercy to pardon us: this mercy is spun out of the bowels of free grace; this is enough to make a sick man well, Isa. xxxiii. 24. ' The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.' Pardon of sin is a mercy of the first magnitude, God seals the sinner's pardon with a kiss. This made David put on his best clothes, and anoint himself: his child newly dead, and God had told him the sword should not depart from his house, yet now he falls anointing himself; the reason was, God had sent him his pardon by the prophet Nathan, 2 Sam. iii. 12, 13. ' The Lord hath put away thy sin.' Pardon is the only fit remedy for a troubled conscience: what can give ease to a wounded spirit, but pardoning mercy? Offer him the honours and pleasures of the world; 'tis as if you bring flowers and music to one that is condemned.

*Q. How may I know my sins are pardoned.*

*Ans.* Where God removes the guilt, he breaks the power of sin, Mic. vii. 19. ' He will have compassion, he will subdue our iniquities.' With pardoning love God gives subduing grace.

9. God shews his mercy in sanctifying us, Lev. xx. 8. ' I am the Lord that sanctify you.' This is the partaking of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. God's spirit is a spirit of consecration, though it sanctify us but in part, yet in every part, 1 Thess. v. 23. This is such a mercy that God cannot give it in anger; if we are sanctified, then we are elected, 2 Thess. ii. 13. ' God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification.' This doth *disponere ad cœtum*; it prepares for happiness, as the seed prepares for harvest. When the virgins had been anointed and perfumed, then they were to stand before the king, Esth. ii. 12. so, when we have had the anointing of God, then we shall stand before the King of heaven.

10. God shews mercy in hearing our prayers, Ps. iv. 1. ' Have mercy upon me and hear my prayer.' Is it not a favour when a man puts up a petition to the king, and hath it granted? when we pray for pardon, adoption the sense of God's love, to have God give a gracious answer; what a signal mercy is this? God may sometimes delay an answer; when he



will not deny. You do not presently throw a musician money, because you love to hear his music: God loves the music of prayer, therefore doth not presently let us hear from him; but, in due season he will give an answer of peace, Psal. lxvi. 20. 'Blessed be God who hath not turned away my prayer nor his mercy from me.' If God doth not turn away our prayer, then he doth not turn away his mercy.

11. God shews mercy in saving us, Titus iii. 5. 'According to his mercy he saved us.' This is the top-stone of mercy, and it is laid in heaven. Now mercy displays itself in all its orient colours; now mercy is mercy indeed, when God shall perfectly refine us from all the lees and dregs of corruption. Our bodies shall be made like Christ's glorious body, and our souls like the angels. Saving mercy is crowning mercy: it is not only to be freed from hell, but enthroned in a kingdom. In this life we do rather desire God than enjoy him; but what rich mercy will it be to be fully possessed of God, to see his smiling face, and to have God lay us in his bosom? This will fill us with 'joy unspeakable and full of glory,' Pf. xvii. 15. 'I shall be satisfied, when I wake, with thy likeness.'

*Use 1.* As an argument against despair, see what a great encouragement here is to serve God; he shews mercy to thousands. Who would not be willing to serve a prince who is given to mercy and clemency? God is represented with a rainbow round about him, Rev. iv. 3. an emblem of his mercy. Acts of severity are rather forced from God: justice is his strange work, Isa. xxviii. 21. Therefore the disciples, who are not said to wonder at the other miracles of Christ, yet did wonder when the fig-tree was cursed and withered, because it was not Christ's manner to put forth acts of severity. God is said to delight in mercy, Micah vii. 18. Justice is God's left-hand, mercy is his right-hand; God useth his right-hand most; he is more used to mercy than to justice *propter est Deus ad parcendum quam ad puniendum*. God is said to be slow to anger, Ps. ciii. 8. but ready to forgive, Ps. lxxxvi. 5. This may encourage us to serve God. What argument will prevail, if mercy will not? Were God all justice, it might fright us from him, but his mercy may be a load-stone to draw us to him.

*Use 2. Branch 1.* Hope in God's mercies, Ps. cxlvii. 11. 'The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear him, and hope in his mercy.' God counts it his glory to be scattering pardons among men.

*Object.* But I have been a great sinner, and sure there is no mercy for me.

*Ans.* No, not if thou goest on in sin, and art so-resolved: but, if thou wilt break off thy sins, the golden sceptre of mercy shall be held forth to thee, Isa. lv. 7. 'Let the wicked forsake his

way, and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him.' And Christ's blood is 'a fountain set open for sin and uncleanness,' Zech. xiii. 1. Mercy doth more overflow in God, than sin in us; God's mercy can drown great sins, as the sea covers great rocks. Some of those Jews, who had their hands imbrued in Christ's blood, were saved by that blood: God loves to magnify his goodness, to display the trophies of free grace, and to set up his mercy above you, in spite of sin: therefore hope in God's mercy.

*Branch 2.* If God shew mercy to thousands, labour to know that this mercy is for you, Psal. lix. 17. 'He is the God of my mercy.' A man that was ready to drown, saw a rainbow; saith he, what am I the better, though God will drown the world, if I drown? so, what are we the better God is merciful, if we perish; let us labour to know God's special mercy is for us.

*Qu. How shall we know it belongs to us?*

*Ans.* 1. If we put an high value and estimation upon God's mercy: God will not throw away his mercy on them that slight it: we prize health, but we prize adopting mercy above it. This is a diamond in the ring, it outshines all other comforts.

2. If we are fearers of God, we have a reverend awe upon us; we tremble at sin, and flee from it, as Moses did from his rod turned into a serpent, Luke i. 50. 'His mercy is on them that fear him.'

3. If we take sanctuary in God's mercy, we trust in it, Psal. lii. 8. As a man is saved by catching hold of a cable; God's mercy is a great cable let down from heaven to us; now taking fast hold of this cable by faith, we are saved, Ps. lii. 8. 'I trust in the mercy of God for ever.' As a man trusteth in his life and goods in a garrison, so we trust our souls in God's mercy.

*Q. What shall we do to get a share in God's special mercy?*

*Ans.* 1. If we would have mercy, it must be through Christ; out of Christ no mercy is to be had. We read in the old law, *First*, None might come into the holy of holies, where the mercy-seat stood, but the high-priest, signifying, we have nothing to do with mercy, but through Christ our high-priest. *2dly*, The high-priest might not come near the mercy-seat without blood, Lev. xvi. 14. to shew that we have no right to mercy, but through the expiatory sacrifice of Christ's blood. *3dly*, The high-priest might not, upon pain of death, come near the mercy-seat without incense, Lev. xvi. 13. No mercy from God without the incense of Christ's intercession: so that if we would have mercy, we must get a part in Christ. Mercy swims to us through Christ's blood.

2. If we would have mercy, we must pray for it, Pf. lxxxv. 7. 'Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation,' Pf. xxv. 16. 'Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me.' Lord, put me not off with common mercy; give me not only mercy to feed and clothe me, but mercy to pardon me; not only sparing mercy, but saving mercy. Lord, give me the cream of thy mercies; let me have mercy and loving-kindness, Pf. ciii. 4. 'Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercy.' Be earnest suitors for mercy; let your wants quicken your importunity: then we pray most fervently, when we pray most feelingly.

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EXOD. XX. 6. *Of them that love me.*

1. God's mercy is for them that love him. Love is a grace that shines and sparkles in God's eye, as the precious stone did upon Aaron's breast-plate. Love is an holy expansion or enlargement of soul, whereby it is carried with delight after God, as the chief good; so Aquinas defines love, *Complacentia amantis in amato*: love is a complacential delighting in God, as in our treasure: love is the soul of religion; 'tis a grace highly momentous. If we had knowledge as the angels, or faith of miracles, yet without love it would profit nothing, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. Love is the first and great commandment,' Matth. xxii. 38. It is so, because, if this be wanting, there can be no religion in the heart; there can be no faith, for faith works by love, Gal. v. 6. All is but pageantry, or a devout compliment.

2. Because love doth meliorate and sweeten all the duties of religion; it makes them savoury meat, else God cares not to taste of them.

3. It is the first and great commandment, in respect of the excellency of this grace. Love is the queen of the graces; it outshines all the other, as the sun the lesser planets. In some respect it is more excellent than faith; tho' in one sense faith be more excellent, *virtute unionis*, as it unites us to Christ; faith puts upon us the embroidered robe of Christ's righteousness, which is a brighter robe than any of the angels wear: yet in another sense love is more excellent, *respectu durationis*, in respect of the continuance of it; it is the most durable grace: faith and hope will shortly cease, but love will remain. When all the other graces like Rachel, shall die in travel, love shall revive. The other graces are in the nature of a lease, only for term of life; love is a freehold, it continues for ever. Thus love carries away the garland from all the other graces, it is the



most long-lived grace, it is a bud of eternity ; this grace alone shall accompany us in heaven.

Qu. 1. *How must our love to God be qualified ?*

Ans. 2. Love to God must be pure and genuine, he must be loved chiefly for himself ; this the schoolmen call *amor amicitiae*. We must love God, not only for his benefits, but for those intrinsic excellencies wherewith he is crowned : we must love God not only for the good which flows from him, but the good which is in him. True love is not mercenary ; a soul that is deeply in love with God, needs not to be hired with rewards : he cannot but love God for the beauty of his holiness : not but that it is lawful to look at God's benefits ; Moses had an eye to the recompence of reward, Heb. xi. 26. but we must not love God only for his benefits, for then it is not love of God but self-love.

2. Love to God must be with all the heart, Mark xii. 20. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.' We must not love God a little, give God a drop or two of our love ; but the main stream of our love must run after him ; the mind must think of God, the will chuse him, the affections pant after him : the true mother would not have the child divided, nor God would not have the heart divided : we must love him with our whole heart. Though we may love the creature, yet it must be a subordinate love : love to God must be highest, as the oil swims above the water.

3. Love to God must be flaming ; to love coldly, is all one as not to love. The spouse is said to be *amore percussa*, 'sick of love,' Cant. ii. 5. The Seraphims are so called, from their burning : love turns saints into seraphims, it makes them burn in holy love to God ; and 'many waters cannot quench this love.'

Qu. 2. *How may we know whether we love God ?*

Ans. 1. He that loves God, desires his sweet presence : lovers cannot be long asunder, they have their fainting fits, they want a sight of the object of their love. A soul deeply in love with God, desires the enjoyment of him in his ordinances, in word, prayer, sacraments. David was ready to faint away and die, when he had not a sight of God, Ps. lxxxiv. 2. 'My soul fainteth for God ;' such as care not for ordinances, but say when will the sabbath be over ? plainly discover want of love to God.

2. He who loves God, doth not love sin, Ps. xcvi. 10. 'Ye that love the Lord hate evil.' The love of God, and the love of sin, can no more mix together, than iron and clay : every sin loved, strikes at the being of God ; but he who loves God, hath an antipathy against sin ; he who would part between two lovers, is an hateful person : God, and the believing soul are two lovers ; sin comes to part between them, therefore the soul is implacably set against sin. By this try your love to God : how

could Dalilah say she loved Samson, when she entertained correspondence with the Philistines who were his mortal enemies? how can he say he loves God, who loves sin, which is God's enemy?

3. He who loves God, is not much in love with any thing else; his love is very cool to worldly things: his love to God moves as the sun in the firmament, swiftly; his love to the world moves as the sun on the dial, very slow. The love of the world eats out the heart of religion; it choaks good affections, as the earth puts out the fire. The world was a dead thing to Paul, Gal. vi. 4. 'I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me.' In Paul we might see both the picture and pattern of a mortified man: he that loves God, useth the world, but chuseth God; the world is his pension, but God is his portion, Psal. cxix. 57. The world doth busy him, but God doth delight and satisfy him. He saith as David, Psal. xliii. 4. 'God my exceeding joy,' the gladness or cream of my joy.

4. He who loves God cannot live without him. Things we love, we know not how to be without; a man can want music or flowers, but not food; a soul deeply in love with God looks upon himself as undone without him, Pl. cxliii. 7. 'Hide not thy face from me, lest I be like them that go down into the pit.' He saith, as Job, chap. xxx. 28. 'I went mourning without the sun.' I have star-light, I want the Sun of righteousness; I enjoy not the sweet presence of my God. Is God our chief good that we cannot live without? alas, how do they demonstrate they have no love to God, who can make a shift well enough to be without him! let them have but corn and oil, and you shall never hear them complain of the want of God.

5. He who loves God, will be at any pains to get him. What pains doth the merchant take, what hazard doth he run, to have a rich return from the Indies? *Extremos currit mercator ad Indos*. Jacob loved Rachel, and he could endure the heat by day, and the frost by night, that he might enjoy her. A soul that loves God, will take any pains for the fruition of him, Pl. lxiii. 8. 'My soul follows hard after God.' Love is *pondus animae*, Aug. It is as the weight which sets the clock a going. The soul is much in prayer, weeping, fasting; he strives as in agony, that he may obtain him whom his soul loves. Plutarch reports of the Gauls, an ancient people of France, after they had tasted the sweet wine of Italy, they never rested till they had arrived at that country. He who is in love with God, never rests till he hath gotten a part in him, Cant. iii. 2. 'I sought him whom my soul loveth.' How can they say they love God, who are not industrious in the use of means to obtain him? Prov. xix. 24. 'A slothful man hides his hand in his bosom.' These are not in agony, but lethargy: if Christ and salvation would

drop as a ripe fig into his mouth, he could be content to have them; but he is loth to put himself to too much trouble. Doth he love his friend, that will not make a journey to him?

6. He that loves God, prefers him before estate and life. 1. Before estate, Phil. iii. 8. 'For whom I have suffered the loss of all things.' Who that loves a rich jewel, would not part with a flower for it? Galeacius marquis of Vico parted with a fair estate to enjoy God in his pure ordinances: when a jesuit persuaded him to return to his popish religion in Italy, promising him an huge sum of money; saith he, 'Let their money perish with them, who esteem all the gold in the world worth one day's communion with Jesus Christ, and his holy Spirit.' 2. Before life, Rev. xii. 11. 'They loved not their lives to the death.' Love to God carries the soul above the love of life, and the fear of death.

7. He who loves God, loves his favourites, viz, the saints, 1 John v. 1. *Idem est motus animi in imaginem et rem.* To love a man for his grace, and the more we see of God in him, the more we love him, is the infallible sign of love to God. The wicked pretend to love God, but hate and persecute his image. Doth he love his prince who abuseth his statue, tears his picture? Indeed they seem to shew great reverence to the saints departed; they have a great reverence for St. Paul, and St. Stephen, and St. Luke: they canonize dead saints, but persecute living saints; and do these love God? can it be imagined he should love God, who hates his children because they are like him; if Christ were alive again, he would not escape a second persecution.

8. If we love God, as we cannot but be fearful of dishonouring him (the more a child loves his father, the more he is afraid to displease him) so we weep and mourn when we have offended him. 'Peter went out and wept bitterly,' Matth. xxvi. 75. When Peter thought how dearly Christ loved him, he took him up to the mount where he was transfigured; Christ shewed him the glory of heaven in a vision: now, that he should deny Christ, after he had received such signal tokens of Christ's love, this broke his heart with grief, 'He wept bitterly.' Are our eyes limbecs, dropping tears of grief for sin against God? a blessed evidence of our love to God: and such shall find mercy. 'He shews mercy to thousands of them that love him.'

*Use.* Let us be lovers of God. We love our food, and shall we not love him that gives it? All the joy we hope for in heaven, is in God; and shall not he who shall be our joy, be our love? It is a saying of St. Austin, *Annon poena satis magna est non amare te?* Is it not punishment enough, Lord, not to love thee? And again, *Animam meam in odio haberem:* I would hate my own soul, if I did not find it loving of God.



Qu. *What are the incentives to provoke and inflame our love to God?*

Ans. 1. God's benefits bestowed on us. A prince who bestows continual favours on a subject, if that subject hath any ingenuity, he cannot but love his prince. God is constantly heaping benefits upon us; 'He fills our hearts with food and gladness,' Acts xiv. 17. As the rock followed Israel, whithersoever they went streams of water out of the rock followed them; so God's blessings follow us every day; we swim in a sea of mercy. The heart is hard, that is not prevailed with by all God's blessings, to love him; *magnus amoris amor*. Kindness works on a brute; the ox knoweth his owner.

2. Love to God would make duties of religion facile and pleasant. I confess to him that hath no love to God, religion must needs be a burden; and I wonder not to hear him say 'What a weariness is it to serve the Lord?' It is like rowing against the tide. But love oils the wheels, it makes duty a pleasure. Why are the angels so swift and winged in God's service, but because they love him? Jacob thought seven years but little, for the love he did bear to Rachel. Love is never weary; he who loves money is not weary of telling it; and he who loves God is not weary of serving him.

3. It is advantageous. There is nothing lost by our love to God, 1 Cor. ii. 9. 'Eye hath not seen, &c. the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' Such glorious rewards are laid up for them that love God, "That (as St. Austin saith) they do not only transcend our reason, but faith itself is not able to comprehend them." A crown is the highest ensign of worldly glory; and God hath promised a 'crown of life to them that love him,' James i. 12. And it is a never-fading crown, 1 Pet. v. 4.

4. By our loving God, we may know that he loves us, 1 John v. 19. 'We love him, because he first loved us.' If the ice melts, it is because the sun hath shined upon it; if the frozen heart melts in love, it is because the Sun of Righteousness hath shined upon it.

Qu. *What means may be used to excite our love to God?*

Ans. 1. Labour to know God aright. The schoolmen say true, *Bonum non amatur, quod non cognoscitur*: we cannot love that which we do not know. God is the most eligible good; all the excellencies which lye scattered in the creature, are united in God: he is *Optimus maximus*. Wisdom, beauty, riches, love, do all center in God. How fair was that tulip which had the colours of all tulips in it? all perfections and sweetneses are eminently in God. Did we know God more, and by the eye of faith see his orient beauty, our hearts would be fired with love to him.

2. Make the scriptures familiar to you. St. Austin saith, before his conversion he took no pleasure in scripture, but after conversion it was his chief delight. The book of God discovers God to us, in his holiness, wisdom, veracity and truth : it represents God rich in mercy, incircled with promises. St. Austin calls the scripture a golden epistle, or love-letter, sent from God to us ; by reading this love-letter, we shall be the more enamoured with love to God ; as by reading lascivious books, comedies, romances, &c. lust is provoked.

3. Meditate much of God, and this will be a means to love him, Ps. xxxix. 3. ‘ While I was musing, the fire burned.’ Meditation is the bellows of the affections. Meditate on God’s love in giving us Christ, John iii. 16. ‘ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,’ &c. That God should give Christ to us, and not to the angels that fell ; that the Sun of Righteousness should shine in our horizon ; that he is revealed to us, and not to others ; what wonderful love is this ! Prov. vi. 28. ‘ Who can go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned ?’ Who can meditate on God’s love ? who can tread on these hot coals, and his heart not burn in love to God ? beg an heart to love God, the affection of love is natural, but not the grace of love, Gal. v. 22. This fire of love is kindled from heaven ; beg that it may burn upon the altar of your heart. Surely this request is pleasing to God, and he will not deny such a prayer, ‘ Lord, give me an heart to love thee.’

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### EXOD. xx. 6. *And keep my Commandments.*

Love and obedience, like two sisters, must go hand in hand : indeed, this is a good evidence of our loving God, John xiv. 21. ‘ If ye love me, keep my commandment.’ *Probatio dilectionis, est exhibitio operis.* The son that loves his father, will obey him. Obedience pleaseth God, 1 Sam. xv. 22. ‘ To obey is better than sacrifice.’ In sacrifice, only a dead beast is offered ; in obedience, a living soul : in sacrifice, only a part of the fruit is offered ; in obedience, fruit and tree, and all : a man offers himself up to God. ‘ Keep my commandments.’ It is not said, God shews mercy to thousands that know his commandments, but that keep them. The knowing God’s commandments, without keeping them, doth not entitle any to mercy. The commandment is not only a rule of knowledge, but duty. God gives us his commandments, not only as a landmark to look upon, but as his will and testament, which we are to perform. A good Christian is like the sun which doth not only send forth light, but goes its circuit round the world : so he

hath not only the light of knowledge, but goes its circuit too, and moves in the sphere of obedience.

Qu. *In what manner must we keep God's commandments?*

Ans. 1. Our keeping the commandments must be fiducial. Our obedience to God's commandments must *profluere a fide*, spring from faith; therefore it is called 'the obedience of faith,' Rom. xvi. 26. 'Abel by faith offered up a better sacrifice than Cain,' Heb. xi. 4. Faith is a vital principle, without it all our services are *opera mortua*, dead works, Heb. vi. 1. Faith doth meliorate and sweeten our obedience, and make it come off with a better relish.

Qu. *But why must faith be mixed with obedience to the commandment?*

Ans. Because faith eyes Christ in every duty, and so both the person and offering are accepted. The high priest under the law laid his hand upon the head of the beast slain, which did point to the Messiah, Exod. xxix. 10. So faith, in every duty, lays its hand upon the head of Christ. His blood doth expiate the guilt, and the sweet odours of his intercession perfume our works of obedience, Eph. i. 6. 'He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.'

2. Our keeping the commandments must be uniform. We must make conscience of one commandment as well as another, Pf. cxix. 6. 'Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments.' Every commandment hath a *jus divinum*, the same stamp of divine authority upon it; and if I obey one precept because God commands, by the same reason I must obey all. Some obey the commands of the first table, but are careless in the duties of the second; and so, *e contra*. Physicians have a rule, when the body sweats in one part, but is cold in another, it is a sign of a distemper: so when men seem zealous in some duties of religion, but are cold and frozen in another, it is a sign of hypocrisy. We must have respect to all God's commandments.

Qu. *But who can keep all commandments?*

Ans. There is a fulfilling of God's commands, and a keeping of them: though we cannot fulfil all, yet we may be said to keep them in an evangelical sense. We may *facere*, though not *perficere*: we keep the commandments evangelically, 1. Where we make conscience of every command; though we come short in every duty, yet we dare not neglect any duty. 2. Our desire is to keep every commandment, Pf. cxix. 5. 'O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!' What we want in strength we make up in will. 3. We grieve that we can do no better; when we fail, we weep; we prefer bills of complaint against ourselves, and judge ourselves for our failings, Rom. vii. 24. 4. We do *elicere conatum*, we endeavour to obey every



commandment, Phil. iii. 14. 'I press toward the mark.' We strive as in agony, and, if it lay in our power, we would fully comport with every commandment. 5. When we fall short, and are unable to come up to the full latitude of the law, we look to Christ's blood to sprinkle our imperfect obedience, and with the grains of his merits cast into the scales to make it pass current; this is an evangelical sense to keep all the commandments; and though it be not to satisfaction, yet it is to acceptance.

3. Our keeping God's commandments must be willing, Isa. i. 19. 'If ye be willing and obedient.' God was for a free-will offering, Deut. xvi. 10. David will run the way of God's commandments, Psal. xix. 32. that is, freely and cheerfully. The lawyers have a canon, adverbs are better than adjectives; it is not the *bonum*, but the *bene*; not the doing much, but the doing well. A musician is not recommended for playing long, but for playing well; it is obeying God willingly is accepted: *virtus nolentium nullum est*; the Lord hates that which is forced, it is rather paying a tax than an offering. Cain served God grudgingly; he brought his sacrifice, not his heart. To obey God's commandments unwillingly, is like the devils who came out of the men possessed, at Christ's command, but with reluctance, and against their will, Matth. viii. 29. *Obedientia præsi*, and *a est non timore pœna, sed amore Dei*; good duties must not be pressed nor beaten out of us, as the waters came out of the rock, when Moses smote it with his rod; but must freely drop from us, as myrrh from the tree, or honey from the comb. If a willing mind be wanting, there wants that flower which should perfume our obedience, and make it a sweet-smelling favour to God. That we may keep God's commandments willingly, let these things be well weighed.

1. Our willingness is more esteemed than our service; therefore David counsels Solomon, not only to serve God, but with a willing mind, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. The will makes sin to be worse, and makes duty to be better. To obey willingly, shews we do it with love; and this crowns all our services.

2. There is that in the law-giver, which may make us willing to obey the commandments, viz. God's indulgencies to us.

(1.) God doth not require the *summum jus*, as absolutely necessary to salvation; he expects not perfect obedience, only requires sincerity. Do but act from a principle of love, and aim at honouring God in your obedience, and it is accepted.

(2.) In the times of the gospel a surety is admitted. The law would not favour us so far; but now God doth so indulge us, that what we cannot do of ourselves, we may do by proxy, 'Jesus Christ is a surety of a better testament.' Heb. vii. 22.

We fall short in every thing, but God looks upon us in our surety ; and Christ having fulfilled all righteousness, it is as if we had fulfilled the law in our own persons.

(3.) God gives strength to do what he requires. The law called for obedience ; but tho' it required brick, it gave no straw ; but in the gospel, God, with his commands, gives power, Ezek. xviii. 31. ' Make ye a new heart.' Alas ! it is above our strength, we may as well make a new world, Ezek. xxxvi. 6. ' I will give you a new heart.' God commands us to cleanse ourselves, Isa. i. 16. ' Wash ye, make you clean. But who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean.' Job xiv. 4. Therefore the precept is turned into a promise, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. ' From all your filthiness will I cleanse you.' When the child cannot go, the nurse takes it by the hand, Hos. xi. 3. ' I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms.'

3. There is that in God's commandments, which may make us willing ; they are not burdensome.

1<sup>st</sup>, For a Christian (so far as he is regenerate) consents to God's commands, Rom. vii. 16. ' I consent to the law that it is good.' What is done with consent, is no burden ; if a virgin gives her consent the match goes on cheerfully ; if a subject consents to his prince's laws (as seeing the equity and rationality of them) then they are not irksome. A regenerate person in his judgment approves, and in his will consents to God's commandments, therefore they are not burdensome.

2<sup>dly</sup>, God's commandments are sweetened with joy and peace. Cicero questions whether that can properly be called a burden, which one carries with delight and pleasure ; *Utrum onus appellatur quod laetitia fertur*. If a man carries a bag of money given him, it is heavy, but the delight takes off the burden. When God gives inward joy, that makes the commandments delightful, Isa. lvi. 7. ' I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.' Joy is like oil to the wheels, which makes a Christian run in the way of God's commandments, so that it is not burdensome.

3<sup>dly</sup>, God's commandments are advantageous. 1. The commandments are preventive of evil ; a curb bit to check us from sin. What mischiefs would we not run into, if we had not afflictions to humble us, and the commandments to restrain us ? God's commandments are to keep us within bounds ; the yoke keeps the beast from straggling : we are to be thankful to God for precepts : had not he set his commandments as an hedge or bar in our way, we might have run to hell and never stopt.

2. There is nothing in the commandments but what is for our good ; Deut. x. 13. ' To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee for thy good.'

1. God commands us to read his word; and what hurt is in this? God bespangles the word with promises; as if a father should bid his son read his last will and testament, wherein he makes over a fair estate to him. 2. God bids us pray: and he tells us, if we ask, 'it shall be given,' Matth. vii. 7. Ask power against sin, ask salvation, and it shall be given. If you had a friend should say, "Come when you will to me, I will supply you with money," would you think it a trouble to visit that friend often; 3. God commands us to fear him, Lev. xxv. 43. 'But fear thy God.' And there is honey in the mouth of this command, Luke i. 50. 'His mercy is upon them that fear him.' 4. God commands us to believe, and why so? 'Believe, and ye shall be saved,' Acts xvi. 31. Salvation is the crown set upon the head of faith: good reason then we obey God's commands willingly; they are for our good, they are not so much our duty as our privilege.

3. God's commandments are ornamental; *Omnia quae praefari jubet Deus, non onerant nos sed ornant*: Salvian. God's commandments do not burden us, but adorn us. It is an honour to be employed in a king's service; and so to be employed in God's, 'by whom kings reign.' To walk in God's commandments, proclaims us to be wise, Deut. iv. 5, 6. 'Behold I have taught you statutes; keep, therefore, and do them; for this is your wisdom.' And to be wise is an honour; I may say of every commandment of God, as Prov. iv. 9. 'It shall give to thy head an ornament of grace.'

4. The commands of God are infinitely better than the commands of sin, these are intolerable. Let a man be under the command of any lust, how doth he tire himself? What hazards doth he run to the endangering his health and soul, that he may satisfy his lust? Jer. ix. 5. 'They weary themselves to commit iniquity.' And, are not God's commandments more equal, facile, pleasant, than the commands of sin? Chrysostom saith true, "To act virtue is easier than to act vice." Temperance is less troublesome than drunkenness; meekness is less troublesome than passion and envy. There is more difficulty in the contrivement and pursuit of a wicked design, than in obeying the commandments of God. Hence a sinner is said to travail with iniquity, Psal. vii. 14. A woman while she is in travail, is in pain, to shew what pain and trouble a wicked man hath in bringing forth sin. Many have gone with more pains to hell, than others have to heaven. This may make us obey the commandments willingly.

5. Willingness in obedience makes us resemble the angels. The cherubims, types representing the angels, are described with wings displayed, to shew how ready the angels are to serve God. God no sooner speaks the word, but they are ambitious



to obey ; how are they ravished with joy, while they are praising God ! In heaven we shall be as the angels ; by our willingness to obey God's commandments, we shall be like them here. This is what we pray for, that God's will may be done by us on earth, as it is in heaven. Is it not done willingly there ? We must keep God's commandments constantly, Psal. cxvi. 3. ' Blessed is he that doth righteousness at all times.' Our obedience to the command must be as the fire of the altar, which never went out, Lev. xiii. 6. It must be as the motion of the pulse always beating. The wind blows off the fruit, our fruits of obedience must not be blown off by the wind of persecution, John xv. 16. ' I have chosen you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.'

*Use.* It reproves them who live in a wilful breach of God's commandments, in malice, uncleanness, intemperance ; they walk antipodes to the commandment. To live in a wilful breach of the commandment is,

*1st,* Against reason. Are we able to stand it out against God ? 1 Cor. x. 22. ' Do we provoke the Lord ? are we stronger than he ?' Can we measure arms with God ? can impotency stand against omnipotency ? A sinner, in acting sin, acts against reason.

*2dly,* It is against equity. We have our being from God ; and, is it not equal we should obey him who gives us our being ? we have all our subsistence from God ; and is it not fitting, that as God gives us our allowance, we should give him our allegiance ? If a general gives his soldier pay, he is to march at his command ; so that to live in the breach of his commands, is against equity.

*3dly,* It is against nature. Every creature in its kind obeys God's laws : 1. Animate creatures obey him ; God spake to the fish, and it set Jonah a shore, Jonah ii. 10. 2. Inanimate creatures ; the wind and the sea obey him, Mark iv. 41. The very stones, if God gave them a commission, will cry out against the sins of men, Hab. ii. 11. ' The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it : ' none disobey God but man and the devil ; and can we find none to join with else ?

*4thly,* It is against kindness. How many mercies have we to allure us to obey ! Miracles of mercy ; therefore the apostle joins these two together, disobedient and unthankful, 2 Tim. iii. 2. and this dyes a sin of a crimson colour. And, as the sin is great, (for it is a contempt of God, a hanging out of the flag of defiance against God, and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft) so the punishment will be proportionable ; such cut themselves off from mercy. God's mercy is for them that keep his commandments, but no mercy for them that live in a wilful breach

of them. All God's judgments set themselves in battle-array against the disobedient. (1.) Temporal judgments, Lev. xxvi. 15, 16. (2.) Eternal. 'Christ comes in flames of fire, to take vengeance on them that obey not,' 2 Thess. i. 8. Such as break the golden chain of God's commands, God hath iron chains to hold them; chains of darkness, in which the devils are held, Jude 6. As long as there is eternity, God hath time enough to reckon with all the wilful breakers of his commandments.

Qu. *How shall we do to keep God's commandments?*

Ans. Beg the Spirit of God. We cannot do it in our own strength; 'The Spirit must work in us both to will and to do,' Phil. ii. 13. When the loadstone draws, the iron moves; when God's Spirit draws, then we run in the way of God's commandments.



## OF THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

EXOD. xx. 7. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

THIS commandment has two parts: *First*, A negative expressed, That we must not take God's name in vain, viz. Cast any reflection and dishonour on God's name. *Secondly*, An affirmative implied, That we should have a care to reverence and honour his name; but that I shall speak to more fully, when I come to the first petition in the Lord's prayer, 'Hallowed be thy name.' I shall now speak of the negative expressed in this commandment, or the prohibition 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.' The tongue is an unruly member, all the parts and organs of the body are defiled with sin, as every branch of wormwood is bitter; 'But the tongue is full of deadly poison,' James iii. 8. 'There is no one member of the body doth more break forth into God's dishonour, than the tongue; therefore this commandment is a bridle for the tongue, it is to bind the tongue to its good behaviour; 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; and this prohibition is backed with a strong reason, 'For the Lord will not hold him guiltless:' that is, he will not hold him innocent. Men of place and eminency take it heinously to have their names abused, and will inflict heavy penalties on the offenders. 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain;' God looks upon him as a criminal person, and he will severely punish him. Well then, the thing to be insist-

ed on, is, That great care must be had, that the holy and reverend name of God be not profaned by us, or taken in vain.

Qu. *How many ways may we be said to take God's name in vain?*

Ans. I. We take God's name in vain, when we speak slightly and irreverently of his name, Deut. xxviii. 58. 'That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God.' David speaks of God with reverence, Psal. l. 1. 'The Lord even the most mighty God,' Psal. lxxxiii. 18. 'That men may know, that thou whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most High over all the earth.' And the disciples, speaking of Jesus, did hallow his name, Luke xxiv. 19. 'Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people.' When we mention the names of kings, we give them some title of honour, as 'excellent majesty;' so should we speak of God with such sacred reverence, as is due to the infinite Majesty of heaven. When we speak slightly of God or his works, God interprets it to be a contempt, and it is a taking his name in vain.

II. When we profess God's name, but do not live answerably to it, it is a taking his name in vain, Titus i. 16. 'In words they profess Christ, but in works they deny him.' When men's tongues and lives cross one another; when, under a mask of profession, men will lie and cozen, and be unclean, these make use of God's name to abuse him, they take his name in vain: *Simulata sanctitas duplex iniquitas*, Rom. ii. 24. 'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you,' When the heathen saw the Jews, who professed to be God's people, to be scandalous, this made them speak evil of God, and hate the true religion for their sakes.

III. We take God's name in vain, when we use God's name in idle discourse. God is not to be spoken of but with an holy awe upon our hearts; and to bring in God's name at every turn when we never think of God, to say, O God! or, O Christ! or, As God shall save my soul; this is taking God's name in vain. And, how many are guilty in this kind! though they have God in their mouths, they have the devil in their hearts. It is a wonder that fire doth not come out from the Lord and consume them, as it did Nadab and Abihu, Lev. x. 2.

IV. We take God's name in vain, when we worship him with our lips, but not our hearts, this is to abuse God. 'Tis the heart which God calls for, Prov. xxxiii. 26. 'My son, give me thy heart.' The heart is the chief thing in religion; it draws the will and affections after it, as the *Primum mobile* draws the other orbs along with it. The heart is the incense that perfumes our holy things, it is the altar that sanctifies the offering.



Now, when we seem to worship God, but withdraw our heart from him, we take his name in vain, Isa. xxix. 13. 'This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips they do honour me, but they have removed their heart from me.'

*1<sup>st</sup>* Hypocrites take God's name in vain, their religion is a lie; they seem to honour God, but they do not love him: their hearts go after their lusts, Hos. iv. 8. 'They set their hearts on their iniquity.' Their eyes are lifted up to heaven, but their hearts are rooted in the earth, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. These are devils in Samuel's mantle, they take God's name in vain.

*2<sup>dly</sup>*, Superstitious persons take God's name in vain. They bring God a few ceremonies which he never appointed; they bow at Christ's name and cringe to the altar, but hate and persecute God's image; these take his name in vain.

V. We take God's name in vain, when we pray to him, but do not believe in him. Faith is the great grace that honours God, Rom. iv. 20. 'Abraham being strong in faith, gave glory to God;' but when we pray to God, but do not mix faith with our prayer, we take his name in vain. I may pray, (saith a Christian) but I shall be never the better; I question whether God doth hear, or whether he will grant. This is to dishonour God, and take his name in vain; this is to make God either an idol, that he hath ears and hears not; or a liar, who promiseth mercy to the penitent, but will not make good his word, John v. 10. 'He that believeth not, hath made God a liar.' When the apostle saith, 'How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?' Rom. v. 34. the meaning is, How shall they call on God aright, and not believe in him? but how many do call on God who do not believe in him? they ask for pardon, but unbelief in whispers, their sins are greater than can be forgiven. Thus to pray and not believe, is to take God's name in vain, and is an high dishonouring of God, as if he were not such a God as the word represents him. 'Plenteous in mercy to all that call upon him,' Psal. lxxxvi. 7.

VI. We take God's name in vain, when we in any kind profane and abuse his word. Now the word of God is profaned, *First*, In general when profane men meddle with it. It is unseemly and unbecoming a wicked man to talk of sacred things, of God's providence, and the decrees of God and heaven; it was very distasteful to Christ, to hear the devil quote scripture, 'It is written.' To hear a wicked man that wallows in sin, talk of God and religion, is offensive: it is the taking of God's name in vain. When the word of God is in the drunkard's mouth, it is like a pearl hung upon a hog. Under the law the lips of the leper were to be covered, Lev. xii. 45. The lips of a profane, drunken minister ought to be covered, he is unfit to speak of God's word, because he takes God's name in vain.

But, *2dly*, more particularly they profane God's word, and take his name in vain,

1. That speak scornfully of God's word, 2 Pet. iii. 4. 'Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.' As if they had said, here is much ado the preachers make about the day of judgment, when all must be called to account for their works; but where is the appearing of that day? we see things keep their course, and continue as they were since the creation; thus they speak scornfully of scripture, and take God's name in vain. If sentence be not speedily executed, men scorn and deride; but, Prov. xix. 29. 'Judgments are prepared for scorers.'

2. That speak jestingly. Such are they who sport and play with scripture; 'tis playing with fire. Some cannot be merry, unless they make bold with God; they make the scriptures an harp to drive away the spirit of sadness, Eusebius relates of one who took a piece of scripture to jest with, God struck him with frenzy. To play with scripture shews a very profane heart. Some will rather lose their souls, than lose their jests; these are guilty of taking God's name in vain. Tremble at it; such as mock at scripture, God will mock at their calamity, Prov. i. 26.

3. They abuse God's word, and take his name in vain, that bring scripture to countenance any sin. The word, which was written for the suppressing of sin, some bring it for the defending of sin. For instance, *First*, If we tell a covetous man of his sin, that covetousness is idolatry, he will bring scripture to maintain his sin; hath not God bid me live in a calling? 'Six days shalt thou labour.' Hath not God said that 'he who provides not for his family is worse than an infidel?' Thus he goes to support his covetousness with scripture, *Ans.* It is true, God hath bid thee take pains in a calling, but not hurt thy neighbour; he hath bid thee provide for thy family, but not by oppression, Lev. xxv. 14. 'Ye shall not oppress one another.' He hath bid thee look after a livelihood, but not with the neglect of thy soul; he hath bid thee lay up thy treasure in heaven, Matth. vi. 20. He hath commanded thee to lay out, as well as lay up: to sow seeds of charity on the backs and bellies of the poor, which perhaps thou neglectest; so that to bring scripture to uphold thee in thy sin, is an high profaning of scripture, and a taking of God's name in vain. *Second* instance, if we tell a man of his inordinate passions, That he may be drunk as well with rash anger, as wine; he will bring scripture to justify it: doth not the word say, 'Be angry and sin not,' Eph. iv. 26. 'Tis true, that anger is good, which is mixed with zeal; then anger is without sin, when it is against sin: but thou dost sin in thine anger; thou speakest unad-

vifedly with thy lips : thy tongue is fet on fire of hell : and to bring fcripture to defend thy fin, is to profane fcripture, and to take God's name in vain.

4. They abufe the word, and take God's name in vain, who adulterate the word, and wrefl it in a wrong fenfe. Such are heretics, who put their own glofs upon fcripture, and make it fpeak that which the Holy Ghoft never meant. For inftance, *Firft*, When we expound thofe texts literally, which are meant figuratively. Thus the Pharifees were guilty, when God faid in the law, 'Thou fhalt bind the commandments for a fign upon thy hand, and they fhall be as frontlets between thine eyes,' Deut. vi. 8. 'The pharifees took it in a literal fenfe ; they got two fcrolls of parchment, wherein they wrote the two tables, putting one on their left-arms, and binding the other to their eye-brows : thus they wrefled the fcripture, and took God's name in vain. That fcripture was to be underftood fpiritually, and by a figure : God meant, by binding his laws upon their hands, that they fhould meditate on his law, and put it in practice ; and fo the papifts expound that fcripture, "This is my body," literally, of the very body of Chrift ; then, when Chrift gave the bread, he fhould have had two bodies, one in the bread, and the other out of the bread ; whereas Chrift meant it figuratively, it is a fign of my body. Thus they, by wrefling the fcripture to a wrong fenfe, profane it, and take God's name in vain. *2dly*, When we expound thofe fcriptures figuratively and allegorically, which the Holy Ghoft means literally. For example, Chrift faid to Peter, 'Launch out into the deep, and make a draught,' Luke v. 4. This text is fpo-ken in a plain, literal fenfe of launching out the fhip ; but the papifts take it in a myftical and allegorical : this text proves, fay they, that the pope : which is Peter's fucceffor, fhall launch forth and catch the ecclefaftical and political power over the weft parts of the world ; this, fay they, was meant when Chrift bade Peter launch out into the deep : but I think the papifts have launched out too far beyond the meaning of the text. When men ftrain their wits, to wrefl the word to fuch a fenfe as pleafeth them, they do profane God's word, and highly take his name in vain.

VII. We take God's name in vain, when we fwear by his name. Many feldom name God's name but in oaths ; for this fin the land mourns, Matth. v. 34. 'Swear not at all,' that is, rafhly and finfully, fo as to take God's name in vain ; not but that in fome cafes it is lawful to take an oath before a magiftrate, Deut. vi. 13. 'Thou fhalt fear the Lord thy God and ferve him, and fwear by his name.' Heb. vi. 16. 'An oath for confirmation is the end of all ftrife :' but when Chrift



faith, 'swear not at all;' he forbids such a swearing as takes God's name in vain. There is a threefold swearing forbidden;

1. Vain-swearing; when men in their ordinary discourse let fly oaths. Some will go to excuse their swearing. It is a coarse wool that will take no dye, and a bad sin indeed that hath no excuse.

*Excuse 1.* I swear little trifling oaths; as *Faith*, or, *By the Mas's.* *Ans.* The devil hath two false glasses, which he sets before mens eyes; the one is a little glass, in which the sin appears so small, that it can hardly be seen; this glass the devil sets before mens eyes when they are going to commit sin; the other is a great magnifying glass, wherein sin appears so big, that it cannot be forgiven; the devil sets this before mens eyes when they have sinned. Thou that sayest, sin is small, when God shall open the eye of thy conscience, then thou wilt see it great, and be ready to despair. But to answer this plea, thou sayest, they are but small oaths; but Christ forbids vain oaths, 'Swear not at all;' If God will reckon with us for idle words, shall not idle oaths be put in the account-book?

*Excuse 2.* But I swear to the truth. See how this harlot-sin would paint itself with an excuse. *Ans.* 1. Tho' it be true, yet if it be a rash oath, 'Tis sinful. Besides, 2. He that swears commonly, it cannot be avoided but sometimes he must swear more than is true: as, where much water runs, some gravel or mud will pass along with the water; so, where there is much swearing some lies will run along with the oaths.

*Excuse 3.* But I shall not be believed, unless I seal up my words with an oath. *Ans.* 1. A man that is honest will be believed without an oath; his bare word carries authority with it, and is as good as letters testimonial. 2. I answer, He who swears, the more he swears, the less others will believe him. *Juris credit minus:* thou art a swearer. Another thinks an oath weighs very light with thee, thou carest not what thou swearest; and the more thou swearest the less he believes thee. He will trust thy bond, but not thy oath.

*Excuse 4.* But it is a custom of swearing I have gotten, and I hope God will forgive me. *Ans.* Tho' among men custom carries it, and is pleadable in law; yet it is not so in the case of sin, custom here is no plea. Thou hast got an habit of swearing, and canst not leave it; is this an excuse? it is a thing well done, because it is commonly done? this is so far from being an excuse, that it is an aggravation of sin. As if one that had been accused for killing a man, should plead with the judge to spare him, because it was his custom to murder: this is an aggravation of the offence, so is it here; therefore all excuses for this sin of vain swearing are taken away. Dare not to live in this sin, it is a taking of God's name in vain.

2. Vile swearing, horrid prodigious oaths not to be named.

Swearers, like mad-dogs, fly in the face of heaven; and when they are angered spue out their blasphemous venom on God's sacred Majesty. Some in gaming, when things go cross, and the dice run against them, their tongues run as fast against God in oaths and curses: and tell them of their sin, go to bring home these asses from going astray, and it is but pouring oil on the flame, they will swear the more. St. Austin saith, "They do no less sin who blaspheme Christ now in heaven, than the Jews did, who crucified him on earth." Swearers profane Christ's blood, and tear his name. An harlot told her husband, that of her three sons, there was but one of them his: the father dying, desired the executors to find out which was the true and natural son, and all his estate he bequeathed to him. The father being dead: the executors set up his corpse against a tree, and delivering to every one of these three sons a bow and arrows, telling them, that he who could shoot nearest the father's heart should have all the estate. The two bastard-sons shot as near as they could to his heart, but the third did feel nature so work in him, that he refused to shoot at his father's heart: whereupon the executors judged him to be the true son, and gave all the estate to him. Such as are the true children of God fear to shoot at him; but such as are bastards, and not sons, care not tho' they shoot at him in heaven with their oaths and curses. And that which makes swearing yet more heinous is when men have resolved upon any wicked action, they bind themselves with an oath to do it, such were they, Acts xxiii. 12. who bound themselves with an oath and curse to kill Paul. To commit sin is bad enough; but to swear we will commit sin, is an high profaning of God's name, and is as it were to call God approve our sin.

3. *Forswearing*: this is a heaven-daring sin, Lev. xix. 12. 'Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shall ye profane my name.' Perjury is a calling God to witness to a lie. It is said of Philip of Macedon, he would swear and unswear, as might stand best with his interest. Jer. iv. 2. 'Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.' In righteousness, therefore it must not be an unlawful oath. In judgment, therefore, it must not be a rash oath. In truth, therefore it must not be a false oath. Among the Scythians, if a man did forswear himself, he was to have his head stricken off: because if perjury were allowed, there would be no living in a commonwealth; it would take away all faith and truth from among men. The perjurer is in as bad a case as the witch; for by a false oath, he binds his soul fast to the devil. In forswearing or taking a false oath in a court, there are many sins linked together; *plurima peccata in uno*: for besides the taking God's name in vain, the perjurer is a thief; by

his false oath he robs the innocent of his right : he is a perverter of justice ; he doth not only sin himself, but occasions the jury to give a false verdict, and the judge to pass an unrighteous sentence ; and sure God's judgments will find him out. When God's flying roll or curse goes over the face of the earth, into whose house doth it enter ? ' Into the house of him who swears falsely ; and it shall consume the timber and stones of his house,' Zech. v. 4. Beza relates of a perjurer, that he had no sooner taken a false oath, but he was immediately struck with an apoplexy, and never spake more, but died. O tremble at such horrid impiety !

VIII. We highly take God's name in vain, when we prefix God's name to any wicked action. I say the mentioning of God to a wicked design, is taking his name in vain. 2 Sam. xv. 7. ' I pray, (saith Absalom) let me pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord in Hebron.' This pretence of paying his vow made to God, was only to cover over his treason, v. 20. ' When ye hear the sound of the trumpet, ye shall say Absalom reigneth.' When any wicked action is baptized with the name of religion, this is taking God's name in vain. Herein the Pope is highly guilty, when he sends out his bills of excommunication or curses against the Christian ; he begins with, *In nomine Dei*, in the name of God. What a provoking sin is this ? It is to do the devil's work, and put God's name to it.

IX. We take God's name in vain, when we use our tongues any way to the dishonour of God's name ; as when we use railing, or curse in our passions ; especially, when we wish a curse upon ourselves if a thing be not so, when we know it to be false. I have read of one who wished his body might rot, if that which he said, was not true ; and soon after his body rotted, and he became a loathsome spectacle.

X. We take God's name in vain, by rash and unlawful vows. There is a good vow when a man binds himself by a vow to do that which the word binds him to ; as, if he be sick, he vows, if God restore him, he will live a more strict holy life, Ps. lxxvi. 13. ' I will pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered when I was in trouble.' But *Voveri non debet quod Deo displicet* : Such a vow should not be made, as is displeasing to God ; as to vow voluntary poverty, as your friars ; or, to vow to live in nunneries. Jephtha's vow was rash and unlawful ; he vowed to the Lord to sacrifice that to him which he met with next, and it was his daughter, Judges xi. 31. He did ill to make the vow, and worse to keep it ; he became guilty of the breach of the third and sixth commandments.

XI. When we speak evil of God, now we take his name in vain, Numb. xxii. 5. ' They spake against God.' Qu. *How do we speak against God ?* Ans. When we murmur at his pro-



vidences, as if he had dealt hardly with us. Murmuring is the accusing of God's justice, Gen. xviii. 26. 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' Murmuring springs from a bitter root, it comes from pride and discontent; it is a reproaching of God, and a high taking his name in vain. It is such a sin as God cannot bear, Numb. xiv. 27. 'How long shall I bear with this people that murmur against me?'

XII. And *lastly*, We take God's name in vain, when we falsify our promise; to say, if God spare us life we will do this, and never intend it. Our promise should be sacred and inviolable; but, if we make no reckoning to make a promise, and mention God's name in it, yet never intend to keep it, it is a double sin; it is telling a lie, and taking God's name in vain. I should come now to the affirmative implied; but hereafter—

*Use.* Take heed of taking God's name in vain any of these ways. Remember this commination and threatening in the text, 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless.' Here is a *meiosis*; less is said, and more intended; 'He will not hold him guiltless;' that is, he will be severely avenged on such an one. 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless.' Here the Lord speaks after the manner of a judge, who holds the court of assize; the judge here, is God himself; the accusers, Satan, and a man's own conscience; the matter of fact is, 'Taking God's name in vain;' the malefactor accused is found guilty, and condemned; 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless.' Methinks, these words, 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless,' may set a lock upon our lips, and make us afraid of speaking any thing that may redound dishonour upon God, or may be a taking his name in vain: 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless.' It may be men may hold such guiltless, when they curse, swear, speak irreverently of God; men may hold them guiltless, let them alone, not punish them. If one takes away another's good name, he shall be sure to be punished; but if he takes away God's good name, where is he that doth punish him? he that robs another of his goods, shall be put to death; but he that robs God of his glory, by oaths and curses, he is spared; but God himself will take the matter into his own hand, and he will punish him who takes his name in vain.

1. Sometimes God punishes swearing and blasphemy in this life. *1<sup>st</sup>*, Swearing. In the country of Samurtia there arose a great tempest of thunder and lightning: a soldier burst forth into swearing; but the tempest tearing up a great tree by the root, it fell upon him, and crushed him to pieces. The German history relates of a youth, who was given to swearing, and did use to invent new oaths; the Lord sent a canker into his mouth, which did eat out his tongue, whereupon he died. *2dly*, blasphemy. He who did blaspheme God, the Lord caused him

to be stoned to death, Lev. xxiv. 11, 23. 'The Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed. And Moses spake to the people of Israel, that they should bring forth him that had cursed, and stone him with stones.' Olympias, an Arian bishop, reproached and blasphemed the sacred Trinity; whereupon he was suddenly struck with three flashes of lightning, which burned him to death. Felix, an officer of Julian, seeing the holy vessels which were used in the sacrament, said, in scorn of Christ, "See what precious vessels the Son of Mary is served withal." Soon after he was taken with a vomiting of blood out of his blasphemous mouth, whereof he died.

2. Or, if God should not execute judgment on the profaners of his name in this life, yet their doom is to come; God will not remit their guilt, but deliver them to Satan the goaler, to torment them for ever. If God justify a man, who shall condemn him? But if God condemn him, who shall justify him? If God lay a man in prison, where shall he get bail or main-prize? God will take his full blow at the sinner in hell, Heb. x. 31. 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'

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## OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 8. *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy Work: But the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any Work, thou, nor thy Son, nor thy Daughter, thy Man-servant, nor thy Maid-servant, nor thy Cattle, nor thy Stranger that is within thy Gates: For in Six Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is, and rested the Seventh Day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

THIS commandment was engraven in stone by God's own finger, and it will be our comfort to have it engraven in our hearts.

The sabbath day is set apart for God's solemn worship; it is God's enclosure, and it must not be alienated to common uses. The Lord hath set a preface before this commandment, he hath put a *memento* to it, 'Remember to keep the sabbath-day holy.' This word 'remember,' shews that we are apt to forget sabbath-holiness; therefore we need a *memorandum* to put us in mind of sanctifying this day.

I shall explain the words.

1. Here is a solemn command, 'Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy.'

2. Many cogent arguments to induce us to observe the command.

I. In the command, (1.) The matter of it, viz. 'The sanctifying of the sabbath, which sabbath-sanctification consists in two things.

1. In resting from our own works.

2. In a conscientious discharge of our religious duty.

(2.) The persons to whom the command of sanctifying the sabbath is given. 1<sup>st</sup>, Either superiors; and they are, 1. More private, as parents and masters. Or, 2. More public, as Magistrates, Or, 2<sup>dly</sup>, Inferiors. 1. Natives, as children and servants, 'Thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant.' 2. Foreigners, 'The stranger that is within thy gates.'

II. The cogent arguments to obey this command of keeping holy the sabbath, 1. From the rationality of it—'Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work;' as if God had said, I am not an hard master, I do not grudge thee time to look after thy calling, and to get an estate. I have given thee six days, six to do all thy work in, and have taken but one day for myself; I might have reserved six days for myself, and allowed thee but one; but I have given thee six days for the works of thy calling, and have taken but one day for my own service; therefore it is equal and rational, that thou shouldest set this day in a special manner apart for my worship.

2. The second argument for sanctifying the sabbath, is taken from the justice of it. 'The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God,' as if God had said, the sabbath-day is my due, I challenge a special right in it, and none hath any thing to do to lay claim to it. He who robs me of THIS DAY, and puts it to common uses, is a sacrilegious person, he steals from the crown of heaven, and I will in no wise hold him guiltless.

3. The third argument for sanctifying the sabbath, is taken from God's own pattern, he 'rested the seventh day;' as if the Lord should say, Will you not follow my pattern? having finished all my works of creation, I rested the seventh day: so you having done all your secular work on the six days you should now cease from the labour of your calling, and dedicate the seventh day to the Lord, as a day of holy rest.

4. The fourth argument for sabbath-sanctification, is taken *ab ulli*, from the benefit which redounds, from a religious observation of the sabbath; 'The Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it:' it is not only a day of God's appointment, God did not only appoint the seventh day, but he blessed the seventh day. The sabbath-day is not only a day of honour to God, but



a day of blessing to us ; it is not only a day wherein we give God worship, but a day wherein he gives us grace ; on this day a blessing drops down from heaven. This is a great argument for the keeping the sabbath-day holy ; God is not benefited by it, we cannot add one cubit to his essential glory : but we ourselves are advantaged ; the sabbath-day, religiously observed, entails a blessing upon our souls, our estate, our posterity ; as the not keeping this day holy brings a curse, Jer. xvii. 27. God curseth a man's blessings, Mal. ii. 2. The bread which he eats is poisoned with a curse ; so the conscientious observation of the sabbath, brings all manner of blessings with it. These are the arguments to induce sabbath-sanctification. And so I have divided the commandment into its several parts, and explained the sense of it.

The thing I would have you observe is, That this commandment, about keeping the sabbath, was not abrogated with the ceremonial law, but it is purely moral, and the observation of the sabbath is to be continued to the end of the world. Where can we shew that God hath given us a discharge from keeping one day in seven ? So that I say, this fourth commandment is moral, and obligeth Christians to the perpetual commemoration and sanctification of the sabbath.

*Qu. Why God hath appointed a sabbath ?*

*Ans.* 1. In respect of himself : it is requisite that God should reserve one day in seven for his own immediate service, that hereby he might be acknowledged to be the great Plenipotentiary or sovereign Lord, who hath power over us, both to command worship, and appoint the time when he will be worshipped.

2. In respect of us : the sabbath-day makes for our interest, it promotes holiness in us ; the business on the week-day makes us too forgetful of God and our souls ; the sabbath brings God into our remembrance. When the dust of the world falling hath clogged the wheels of our affections, that they would scarce move towards God, the sabbath comes, and oils the wheels of our affections, and now they move swiftly in religion : therefore God hath appointed a sabbath to ripen our holiness. On this day the thoughts contemplate heaven, the tongue speaks of God, and is as the pen of a ready writer ; now the eye drop tears, now the soul burns in love. When the heart was all the week frozen, now on the sabbath it is melted with the word. The sabbath is a friend to religion, it files off the rust of our graces ; it is a spiritual jubilee, wherein the soul is set to converse with its Maker.

I should, in the next place, shew you the *modus*, or manner how we should keep the sabbath-day holy. But, before I come to that, I shall propound a great question, viz.

*Qu. How comes it to pass that we do not keep the seventh-day sabbath, as it was in the primitive institution, but have changed it to another day?*

*Ans.* The old seventh-day sabbath (which was the Jewish sabbath) is abrogated, and in the room of it the first day of the week (which is the Christian sabbath) succeeds. The morality or substance of the fourth commandment doth not lie in keeping the seventh day precisely, but in keeping one day in seven, which God hath appointed.

*Qu. But how comes the first day in the week to be substituted in the room of the seventh day?*

*Ans.* Not by ecclesiastic authority. The church (saith Mr. Perkins) hath no power to ordain a sabbath. But,

1. The change of the sabbath from the last day of the week to the first, was by Christ's own appointment. Christ is 'Lord of the sabbath,' Mark ii. 28. And who shall appoint a day but he who is Lord of it? He made this day, Psal. cxviii. 24. 'This is the day which the Lord hath made.' Arnobius, and the current of expositors, understand it of our Christian sabbath, and it is called the 'Lord's day,' Rev. i. 10. As it is called the 'Lord's supper,' because of the Lord's instituting the bread and wine, and setting it apart from a common use to a more special and sacred use: so it is called the Lord's day, because of the Lord's instituting it, and setting it apart from common days, to his special worship and service. Christ arose on the first day of the week out of the grave, and appeared twice on this day to his disciples, John xx. 19, 26. which was to intimate to the disciples (say Austin and Athanasius) that he transferred the Jewish sabbath to the Lord's day.

2. The keeping of the first day (which is the Lord's day) was the practice of the apostles, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Acts xx. 7. 'On the first day of the week, when his disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them.' Here was both preaching and breaking of bread on this day. Austin, and Innocentius, and Isidore, make the keeping of our gospel sabbath to be an apostolical *sanction*, and affirm, that by virtue of the apostles practice, the Lord's day is to be sequestered and set apart for divine worship. What the apostles did, they did it by divine authority; for they were inspired by the Holy Ghost.

3. Besides, the primitive church held the Lord's day, which we now celebrate, in high estimation: it was a great badge of their religion, to observe this day. Ignatius, the most ancient father, who lived in the time of St. John the apostle, hath these words, "Let every one that loveth Christ, keep holy the first day of the week, the Lord's day." This day hath been observed by the church of Christ, above sixteen hundred years,

as learned Bucer notes. Thus you see how the seventh-day sabbath comes to be changed to the first-day sabbath.

Now there is a grand reason for changing of the Jewish sabbath to the Lord's day, because this puts us in mind of the 'Mystery of our redemption by Christ.' The reason why God did institute the old sabbath was, Because God would have it kept as a memorial of the creation: but the Lord hath now brought the first day of the week in the room of it, in memory of a more glorious work than Creation, and that is Redemption.

Great was the work of creation, but greater was the work of redemption. As it was said, Hag. ii. 9. 'The glory of the second temple was greater than the glory of the first temple:' so the glory of the redemption was greater than the glory of the creation. Great wisdom was seen in the curious making us, but more miraculous wisdom in saving us. Great power was seen in bringing us out of nothing, but greater power in helping us when we were worse than nothing. It cost more to redeem us, than to create us. In the creation there was but 'speaking a word,' Psal. cxlviii. 5. In the redeeming us, there was 'shedding of blood,' 1 Pet. i. 19. 'The creation was the work of God's fingers,' Psal. viii. 3. 'Redemption was the work of his arm,' Luke i. 5. In the creation, God gave us ourselves; in the redemption, he gave us himself; by creation, we have a life in Adam; by redemption, we have a life in Christ, Col. iii. 3. By creation, we had a right to an earthly paradise; by redemption, we have a title to an heavenly kingdom. So that well Christ might change the seventh day of the week into the first, because this day puts us in mind of our redemption, which is a more glorious work than the creation.

*Use.* The use I shall make, is, that we should have this Christian sabbath, we now celebrate, in high veneration. The Jews called the sabbath, "The desire of days, and the Queen of days;" it is a day of sweet rest. This day we must call a 'Delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable,' Isa. lviii. 13. Metal that hath the king's stamp upon it is honourable, and of great value. God hath set his royal stamp upon the sabbath: it is the sabbath of the Lord, this makes it honourable. This day we should look upon as the best day in the week. What the phænix is among the birds, what the sun is among the planets, that the Lord's day is among other days. 'This is the day which the Lord hath made,' Psal. cxviii. 24. God hath made all the days, but he hath blessed this. As Jacob got the blessing from his brother, so the sabbath got the blessing from all the other days in the week: the sabbath is a day in which we converse in a special manner with God. The Jews called the sabbath "A day of light;" on this day the Sun of



Righteousness shines upon the soul. The sabbath is the market-day of the soul, the cream of time; this is the day of Christ's rising out of the grave, and the Holy Ghost's descending upon the earth: this day is perfumed with the sweet odour of prayer, which goes up to heaven as incense; this day the manna falls, that angels' food: this is the soul's festival day, on this day all the graces act their part: the other days of the week are most employed about earth, this day about heaven: then you gather straw, now pearl. Now Christ takes the soul up into the mount, and gives it transfiguring sights of glory: now Christ leads his spouse into the wine-cellar, and displays the banner of his love; now he gives her his spiced wine, and the juice of the pomegranate, Cant. ii. 8. The Lord doth usually reveal himself more to the soul on this day. The apostle John 'was in the spirit on the Lord's day,' Rev. i. 10. He was carried up in divine raptures towards heaven. This day a Christian is in the altitudes, he walks with God, and takes as it were a turn with him in heaven, 1 John i. 3. On this day holy affections are quickened; the stock of grace is improved, corruptions are weakened: on this day Satan falls like lightning before the majesty of the word. Christ wrought most of his miracles upon the sabbath; so he doth now; the dead soul is raised, the heart of stone is made flesh. How should this day be highly esteemed, and had in reverence! This day is more precious than rubies; God hath anointed this day with the oil of gladness above its fellows. On the sabbath we are doing angels' work, our tongues are tuned to God's praises. This sabbath on earth, is a shadow and type of that glorious rest and eternal sabbath we hope for in heaven, when God shall be the temple, and the Lamb shall be the light of it, Rev. xxi. 22, 23.

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## OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. XX. 9, 10. *Six Days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: But the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt do no manner of work, &c.*

'Six days shalt thou labour.'—God would not have any live out of a calling: religion seals no warrant for idleness. 'Tis as well a duty to labour six days, as to keep holy rest on the seventh day: 'Six days shalt thou labour.' 2 Theff. iii. 11. 'We hear there are some among you, walking disorderly, working not at all. Now, them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.' A christian must not only mind heaven,

but his calling. While the pilot hath his eye to the star, he hath his hand to the helm. Without labour the pillars of a commonwealth will dissolve, and the earth will be like the slug-gard's field, over-run with briars, Prov. xxiv. 31. Adam in innocency, tho' he was the monarch of the world, yet God would not have him idle, but he must dress and till the ground, Gen. ii. 15. Piety doth not exclude industry. 'Six days shalt thou labour.' Standing water putrifies. The inanimate creatures are in motion : the sun goes its circuit, the fountain runs, the fire sparkles : and animate creatures : Solomon sends us to the ant and pismire to learn labour, Prov. vi. 6. chap. xxx. 35. The bee is the emblem of industry ; some of the bees trim the honey, others work the wax, others form the comb, others lie centinel at the door of the hive to keep out the drone. And shall not man much more inure himself to labour ? That law in paradise was never yet repealed, 'In the sweat of thy brows shalt thou eat bread,' Gen. iii. 19. Such professors are to be disliked, who talk to living by faith, but live out of a calling ; they are like the lilies which toil not, neither do they spin, Matth. vi. 28. 'Tis a speech of the holy and learned Mr. Perkins. " Let a man be endowed with excellent gifts, and hear the word with reverence, and receive the sacrament ; yet if he practise not the duties of his calling, all is but hypocrisy." What is an idle person good for ? what benefit is there of a ship that lies always on the shore ? or of armour that hangs up and rusts ? To live out of a calling, exposeth a person to temptation. Melancthon calls idleness the devil's bath, because he bathes himself with delight in an idle soul. We do not use to sow seed in ground when it lies fallow ; but Satan sows most of his seed of temptation in such persons as lie fallow, and are out of a calling. Idleness is the nurse of vice. Seneca, an old heathen, could say, *Nullus mihi per otium dies exit* ; No day passeth me without some labour. An idle person stands for a cypher in the world, and God writes down no cyphers in the book of life. We read in scripture of eating the 'bread of idleness,' Prov. xxx. 29. and drinking the 'wine of violence.' Prov. iv. 17. It is as well a sin 'to eat the bread idleness,' as to 'drink the wine of violence.' An idle person can give no account of his time ; time is a talent to trade with, both in our particular and general calling ; the slothful person 'hides his talent in the earth,' he doth no good, his time is not lived, but lost ; an idle person lives unprofitably, he cumbers the ground ; God calls the slothful servant 'Wicked,' Matth. xxv. 26. 'Thou wicked and slothful servant.' Draco, whose laws were written in blood, deprived them of their life, who would not work for their living. In Heturia, they caused such persons to be banished. Idle persons live in the breach of this commandment,

‘Six days shalt thou labour;’ let them take heed they be not banished heaven. A man may as well go to hell for not working in his calling, as for not believing. So I pass to the next.

*But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt do no manner of work.*

Having spoken already of the reasons of sanctifying the sabbath, I come now to that question;

Qu. *In what manner we are to sanctify the sabbath?*

Ans. 1. *Negatively.* We must do no work in it; that is expressed in the commandment, ‘In it thou shalt do no manner of work.’ God hath enclosed this day for himself; therefore we are not to lay it common, by doing any civil work. As Abraham, when he went to sacrifice, left his servant and the ass at the bottom of the hill, Gen. xii. 5. So, when we are to worship God this day, we must leave all worldly business behind, leave the ass at the bottom of the hill. And as Joseph, when he would speak with his brethren, thrust out the Egyptians, so, when we would converse with God this day, we must thrust out all earthly employments. The Lord’s day is a day of holy rest, all secular work must be forborn and suspended; it is a profaning the day, Neh. xiii. 15. ‘In these days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, as also wine-grapes and figs, and all manner of burdens which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day; and I testified against them. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, ‘What evil thing is that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?’ It is sacrilege to rob that time for civil work which God hath dedicated and set apart for his worship. He that converts any time of the sabbath for worldly business, is a worse thief than he who robs on the highway; for such a thief does but rob man, but this thief robs God, he robs him of his day. The Lord forbade manna to be gathered on the sabbath day, Exod. xvi. One would think that might have been dispensed with, for manna was the ‘Staff of their life;’ and the time when manna fell was early, between five and six in the morning; so that they might have gathered it betimes, and all the rest of the sabbath they might have employed in God’s worship; and besides, they needed not to have taken any great journey for manna, for it was but stepping out of their doors, and it fell about their tents: yet they might not gather manna on the sabbath: and, but for purposing to gather it, God was very angry, Exod. xvi. 27, 28. ‘There went out some of the people on the seventh day to gather, and they found none: and the Lord said, ‘How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?’ Surely the anointing Christ when he was dead, was a commendable work; but Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, tho’ they had



prepared sweet ointments to anoint the dead body of Christ, yet they came not to the sepulchre to embalm him, till the sabbath was past, Luke xxiii. 56. 'They rested on the sabbath day according to the commandment.' The hand cannot be busied on the Lord's day, but the heart will be defiled. The very heathens, by the light of nature, would not do any secular work, in that time which they had set apart for the worship of their false gods. Clemens Alexandrinus reports of one of the emperors of Rome, that on the day of set worship for his gods, he did forbear warlike affairs, and did spend that time in his devotion. To do servile work on the sabbath, shews an irreligious heart, and highly affronts God: to work servile work on this day, is to follow the devil's plough; it is to debase the soul. God hath made this day on purpose to raise the heart up to heaven, to converse with God, to do angel's work; and to be employed in earthly work, is to degrade the soul of its honour. God will not have his day entrenched upon, or defiled in the least thing: the man that gathered sticks on the sabbath, God would have him stoned, Numb. xv. One would think it a small thing, to pick up a few sticks to make a fire; but God would not have this day violated in the smallest matters. Nay, that work which had a reference to a religious use, might not be done on the sabbath, as the hewing of stones for the building of the sanctuary: Bezaleel, who was to cut the stones, and carve the timber out for the sanctuary, yet he must forbear it on the sabbath, Exod. xxxi. 15. A temple is the place of God's worship, but it were a sin to build a temple on the Lord's day. This is keeping the sabbath day holy negatively, in doing no servile work. Yet caution: not that works of necessity and charity may be done on this day; God, in these cases, will have mercy and not sacrifice. (1.) 'Tis lawful to take the necessary recruits of nature; food is to the body, as oil to the lamp. (2.) 'Tis lawful to do works of mercy, as helping our neighbour when either life or estate are in danger. Herein the Jews were too nice and precise, they would not suffer works of charity to be done on the sabbath: if a man were sick, they thought on this day they might not use the means for his recovery. Christ chargeth them with this, that they were angry that he had wrought a cure on the sabbath, John vii. 23. If a house were on fire, the Jews thought they might not bring water to quench it; if a vessel did run, they thought that on this day they might not stop it. These were 'righteous overmuch:' Here was seeming zeal, but it wanted discretion to guide it. But unless in these two cases of necessity and charity, all secular work is to be suspended and laid aside on the Lord's day; 'In it thou shalt do no manner of work.' Which justly doth arraign and condemn many among us, who do too much foul their

fingers with work on that day ; some dressing great feasts, others in opening their shop doors, and selling meat on the sabbath, which I have seen. The mariner will not set to sea, but on the sabbath, and so runs full sail into the breach of this commandment. Others work on this day, tho' privately ; they put up their shop windows, but follow their trade within doors : but though they think to hide their sin under a canopy, God sees it, Psal. cxxxix. 7. ' Whither shall I go from thy presence ? ' ver. 12. ' The darkness hideth not from thee.' These persons do profane this day, and God will have an action of trespass against them.

2. *Positively.* We keep the sabbath-day holy, by ' consecrating and dedicating' this day to the ' service of the high God.' 'Tis good to rest on the sabbath-day from the works of our calling : but if we rest from labour, and do no more, the ox and the ass keep the sabbath as well as we ; for they rest from labour. We must dedicate the day to God ; we must not only ' keep a sabbath,' but ' sanctify' a sabbath. This sabbath sanctification consists in two things ; I. The solemn preparation for it. II. The sacred observation of it. 1. The solemn preparation for it. If a prince were to come to your house, what preparation would you make for his entertainment ? sweep the house, wash the floor, adorn the room with the richest tapestry and hangings, that there might be something suitable to the state and dignity of so great a person. On the blessed sabbath God intends to have sweet communion with you ; he seems to say to you, as Christ to Zaccheus, Luke xix. 5. ' Make haste, and come down, for this day I must dine with you.' Now, what preparation should you make for entertaining this King of glory ! Now this preparation for the sabbath is, *First*, When the evening of the Saturday approacheth, sound a retreat ; call your minds off from the world, and summon your thoughts together, to think of the great work of the day approaching. *Secondly*, Purge out all unclean affections, which may indispose you for the work of the sabbath. Evening preparation will be like the tuning of the instrument, it will fit the heart the better for the duties of the ensuing sabbath.

2. *The sacred observation of it ;* touching which these things are to be practised.

(1.) Rejoice at the approach of this day, as being a day wherein we have a prize for our souls, enjoy much of God's presence, John viii. 56. Abraham ' saw my day, and rejoiced.' So, when we see the light of a sabbath shine, we should rejoice, Isa. lviii. 13. ' Thou shalt call the sabbath a delight : ' this is the queen of days, which God hath crowned with a blessing. As there was one day in the week on which God did rain manna twice as much as upon any other day, so God rains down the

manna of heavenly blessings twice as much on the sabbath as on any other. This is the day wherein Christ carries the soul into the house of wine, and displays the banner of love over it; now the dew of the Spirit falls on the soul, whereby it is revived and comforted. How many may write the Lord's day, the day of their new birth! this day of rest is a pledge and earnest of that eternal rest in heaven: and shall not we rejoice at the approach of it? that day on which the Sun of Righteousness shines, should be a day of gladness.

(2.) Get up betimes on the sabbath morning. Christ rose early on this day, before the sun was up, John xx. 1. Did Christ rise early to save us, and shall not we rise early to worship and glorify him? Ps. lxiii. 1. 'Early will I seek thee.' Can we be up betimes on other days? the husbandman is early at his plough, the traveller riseth early to go his journey, and shall not we, when we are on this day travelling to heaven? certainly, did we love God as we should, we would rise on this day betimes, that we may meet with him whom our soul loveth. Such as sit up late at work on the night before, will be so buried in sleep, that they will hardly be up betimes on a sabbath morning.

(3.) Having dressed our bodies, we must dress our souls for the hearing of the word. As the people of Israel were to wash themselves before the law was delivered to them, Exod. xix. 20. so we must wash and cleanse our souls; and that is, by reading, meditation and prayer.

1. By reading the word. The word is a great means to sanctify the heart, and bring it into a sabbath-frame, John xvii. 17. 'Sanctify them through thy truth. &c.' And read the word not carelessly, but with seriousness and affection; it is the oracle of heaven, the well of salvation, the book of life. David, for the preciousness of God's word, esteemed it above gold; and, for the sweetness, above honey, Ps. xix. 10. By reading the word aright, our hearts, when they are dull, are quickened; when they are hard, are mollified; when cold and frozen, are inflamed; and we can say as the disciples, 'Did not our hearts burn within us?' Some step out of their bed to hearing. The reason why many get no more good on a sabbath by the word preached, is, because they did not breakfast with God in the morning, by reading of his word.

II. *Meditation.* Get upon the mount of meditation, and so converse with God. Meditation is the soul's retiring of itself, that, by a serious and solemn thinking upon God, the heart may be raised up to divine affections.

Meditation is a work fit for the morning of a sabbath. Meditate on four things;

(1.) On the works of creation. That is expressed here in



the commandments, 'The Lord made heaven and earth, the sea,' &c. The creation is a looking-glass, in which we see the wisdom and power of God gloriously represented. God produced the fair structure of the world without any pre-existent matter, and with a word, Ps. xxxiii. 6. 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.' The disciples wondered that Christ could, with a word calm the sea, Matth. viii. 26. But it was far more with a word, to make the sea. Let us on a sabbath meditate on the infiniteness of our Creator. Look up to the firmament, there we may see 'God's wonders in the deep,' Ps. cvii. 24. Look into the earth, there we may behold the nature of minerals, the power of the load-stone, the virtue of herbs, the beauty of flowers. By meditating on these works of creation, so curiously embroidered, we come to admire God, and praise him, Ps. civ. 24. 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all.' By meditating on the works of creation, we come to confide in God. He who can create, can provide; he that could make us when we were nothing, he can raise us when we are low, Ps. cxxiv. 8. 'Our help stands in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.'

(2.) Meditate on God's holiness, Ps. cxi. 9. 'Holy and reverend is his name.' Hab. i. 13. 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.' God is essentially, originally, and efficiently holy: all the holiness in men and angels is but a crystal stream that runs from this glorious ocean. God loves holiness, because it is his own image: a king cannot but love to see his own effigies stamped on coin: God counts holiness his glory, and the most sparkling jewel of his crown, Exod. xv. 11. 'Glorious in holiness.' Here is a meditation fit for our first entrance into a sabbath, God's holiness: the contemplation of this would work in us such a frame of heart as is suitable to an holy God: it would make us then reverence his name, hallow his day: while we are musing of the holiness of God's nature, we begin to be transformed into his likeness.

(3.) Meditate on Christ's love in redeeming us, Rev. i. 5. Redemption exceeds creation: the one is a monument of God's power, the other of his love. Here is fit work for a sabbath. O the infinite stupenduous love of Christ in raising poor lapsed creatures from a state of guilt and damnation! (1.) *That Christ who was God should die*; that this glorious Sun of Righteousness should be in an eclipse: we can never enough admire this love, no, not in heaven. (2.) *That Christ should die for sinners*; not sinful angels, but sinful mankind. That such clods of earth and sin should be made bright stars of glory: O the amazing love of Christ! This was *Illustre amori, Christ mnemosynum*, Brugenfis. (3.) *That Christ should not only die for sinners, but die as a sinner*, 2 Cor. v. 21. 'He was made sin for us.' He who

was among the glorious persons of the Trinity, 'was numbered among transgressors,' Isa. liii. 12. Not that he had sin, but he was like a sinner, having our sins imputed to him. Sin did not live in him, but it was laid upon him. Here was an hyperbole of love, enough to strike us into astonishment. (4.) *That Christ should redeem us, when he could not look to gain any thing, or be advantaged at all by us.* Men will not lay out their money upon a purchase, unless it will turn to their profit : but what benefit could Christ expect in purchasing and redeeming us ? We were in such a condition, that we could neither deserve nor recompense Christ's love. *First,* We could not deserve it ; for we were in our blood, Ezek. xvi. 6. We had no spiritual beauty to tempt Christ. Nay, we were not only in our blood, but we were up in arms, Rom. v. 8. When we were 'enemies, Christ died for us : ' when he was shedding his blood, we were spitting our poison. *Secondly,* As we could not deserve, so neither could we recompence Christ's love : for, 1. After he had died for us, we could not so much as love him, till he made us love him. 2. We could give Christ nothing in lieu of his love, Rom. xi. 35. 'Who hath first given to him ? ' We were fallen to poverty. If we have any beauty, it is from Christ, Ezek. xvi. 14. 'Thou wert comely thro' my comeliness which I put upon thee.' If we bring forth any good fruit, it is not of our own growth, it comes from Christ the true vine, Hos. xiv. 8. 'From me is thy fruit found.' So that it was nothing but pure love, for Christ to lay out his blood to redeem such as he could not expect to be really bettered by. (5.) *That Christ should die so willingly,* John x. 17. 'I lay down my life.' The Jews could not have taken it away, if he had not laid it down : he could have called to his Father for a legion of angels to be his life-guard ; but what needed that, when his Godhead could have defended him from all assaults ? but he 'laid down his life : ' the Jews did not so much thirst for Christ's death, as he thirsted for our redemption, Luke xii. 50. 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished ? ' Christ called his sufferings a baptism : he was to be baptized and sprinkled with his own blood ; and Christ thought the time long before he suffered ; 'How am I straitened till it be accomplished.' Therefore to shew Christ's willingness to die, his sufferings are called an offering, Heb. x. 10. 'By the offering of the body of Jesus : ' his death was a free-will offering. (6.) *That Christ should not grudge nor think much of all his sufferings ;* his being scourged and crucified (we grudge him a light service) but that he should be well contented with what he hath done ; and, if it were to do again, he would do it, Isa. liii. 11. 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.' As the mother though she hath hard labour ; yet

when she sees a child brought forth, she doth not repent of her pangs, but is well contented: so Christ, though he had hard travail upon the cross, which put him into an agony, yet he doth not think much; he is not troubled, but thinks his sweat and blood well bestowed, because he sees the man-child of redemption brought forth into the world. 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.' (7.) *That Christ should make redemption effectual to some, and not to others*; here is the quintessence of love. Though there is a sufficiency in Christ's merit to save all, yet only some partake of its saving virtue; all do not believe, John vi. 64. 'There are some of you that believe not.' Christ doth not pray for all, John xvii. 9. Some refuse Christ, Psal. cxviii. 22. 'This is the stone which the builders refused.' Others deride him, Luke xvi. 14. Others throw off his yoke, Luke xix. 14. 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' So that all have not the benefit of salvation by him. Herein appears the distinguishing love of Christ, that the virtue of his death should reach some, and not others, 1 Cor. i. 26. 'Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.' That Christ should pass by many of birth and parts, and that the lot of free grace shall fall upon thee; that he should sprinkle his blood upon thee; 'The depth of the love of Christ.' (8.) *That Christ should love us with such an entire transcendent love*. The apostle calls it a 'Love which passeth knowledge,' Eph. iii. 19. That he should love us more than the angels; he loves them as his friends, believers as his spouse. He loves them with such a kind of love as God the Father bears to him, John xv. 9. 'As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.' O what an hyperbole of love doth Christ shew in redeeming us! (9.) *That Christ's love in our redemption should be everlasting*, John xii. 1. 'Having loved his own, he loved them to the end.' As Christ's love is matchless, so endless; the flower of Christ's love is sweet; and that which makes it sweeter, it never dies. Christ's love is eternized, Jer. xxxi. 3. He will never divorce his elect spouse. The failings of his people cannot quite take off his love: they may eclipse his love, or wholly remove it; their failings may make Christ angry with them, but not hate them. Every failing doth not break the marriage-knot. Christ's love is not like the saints' love; sometimes they have strong affections towards Christ, at other times the hot fit is off, and they can find little or no love stirring in them: but it is not so with Christ's love to the saints, it is a love of eternity. When the sun-shine of Christ's electing love is once risen upon the soul, it never sets finally. Death may take away our life from us, but not Christ's love. Behold here a rare subject in a sabbath-morning to meditate upon! The me-



ditation of Christ's wonderful love in redeeming us, would work in us a sabbath-frame of heart.

*First*, It would melt us into tears for our spiritual unkindnesses ; that we should sin against so sweet a Saviour ; that we should be no more affected with his love, but requite evil for good ; like the Athenians, who, notwithstanding all the good service Aristides had done them, banished him out of their city ; that we should grieve Christ with our pride, rash anger, our unfruitfulness, animosities, strange factions. Have we none to abuse but our friend ? Have we nothing to kick against but the bowels of our Saviour ? Did not Christ suffer enough upon the cross, but we must needs make him suffer more ? Do we give him more ' gall and vinegar to drink ?' O if any thing can dissolve the heart in sorrow, and broach the eyes with tears, it is disingenuity and unkindness offered to Christ. When Peter thought of Christ's love to him, how he had made him an apostle, and revealed his bosom-secrets to him, and taken him to the mount of transfiguration, and that he should deny Christ, it broke his heart with sorrow ; ' he went out, and wept bitterly,' Mat. xxvi. 75. What a blessed thing is it to have the eyes dropping tears on a sabbath ! and nothing would sooner fetch tears, than to meditate on Christ's love to us, and our unkind requitals.

*Secondly*, The meditating on a Lord's Day morning of Christ's love, would kindle love in our hearts to Christ. How can we look on Christ's bleeding and dying for us, and our hearts not be warmed with love to him ? Love is the soul of religion, the purest affection ; it is not rivers of oil, but sparks of love that Christ values. And sure, as David said, ' While I was musing the fire burned,' Psal. xxxix. 3. So, while we are musing of Christ's love in redeeming us, the fire of our love would burn towards Christ ; and then is a Christian in a blessed sabbath frame, when he is like a seraphim burning in love to Christ.

(4.) On a sabbath-morning meditate on the glory of heaven. Heaven is the extract and quintessence of happiness. It is called a kingdom, Matth. xxv. 34. A kingdom for its riches and magnificence ; it is set out by ' precious stones, gates of pearl,' Rev. xxi. There is all that is truly glorious ; transparent light, perfect love, unstained honour, unmixed joy ; and that which crowns the joy of the celestial paradise, is eternity. Suppose earthly kingdoms were more glorious than they are, their foundations of gold, their walls of pearl, their windows of sapphire, yet they are corruptible ; but the kingdom of heaven is eternal ; those rivers of pleasure ' run for evermore,' Ps. xvi. 11. And that wherein the essence of glory consists, and makes heaven to be heaven, is the immediate sight and fruition of the blessed God, Psal. xvii. 15. ' When I awake I shall be satisfied with

thy likeness.' O think of this Jerusalem above ! this is proper for a sabbath.

1. The meditation of heaven would raise our hearts above the world. O how would these things disappear and shrink into nothing, if our minds were mounted above the visible orbs, and we had a prospect of glory !

2. How would the meditation of heaven make us heavenly in our sabbath exercises ! it would quicken affection, it would add wings to devotion, it would make us to be ' in the Spirit on the Lord's day,' Rev. i. 10. How vigorously doth he serve God, who hath a crown of glory always in his eye !

III. We dress our souls on a sabbath-morning, by prayer, Matth. vi. 6. ' When thou prayest, enter into thy closet,' &c. Prayer sanctifies a sabbath.

1. The things we should pray for in the morning of the sabbath.

Beg a blessing upon the word which is to be preached, that it may be a favour of life to us ; that by it our minds may be more illuminated, our corruptions more weakened, our stock of grace more increased : pray that God's special presence may be with us, that our hearts may burn within us while God speaks : pray that we may receive the word into meek, humble hearts, James i. 22. That we may submit to it, and bring forth the fruits of it. Nor should we only pray for ourselves, but for others.

*First*, For him who dispenseth the word ; that his tongue may be touched with a coal from God's altar ; that God would warm his heart, who is to help to warm others. Your prayers may be a means to quicken the minister. Some complain, they find not that benefit by the word preached : perhaps they did not pray for their minister as they should. Prayer is like the whetting and sharpening of an instrument, which makes it cut the better.

*Secondly*, Pray with and for your family : yea, pray for all the congregations that meet this day in the fear of the Lord ; that the dew of the Spirit may fall with the manna of the word, that some souls may be converted, and others strengthened ; and that gospel ordinances may be continued, and have no restraint put upon them. These are the things we should pray for. The tree of mercy will not drop its fruit, unless it be shaken by the hand of prayer.

(2.) The manner of our prayer. It is not enough to say a prayer, to pray in a dull, cold manner, which teacheth God to deny ; but we must pray with reverence, humility, hope in God's mercy, fervency, Luke xxii. 44. Christ prayed more earnestly. And that we may pray with more fervency, we must pray with a sense of our wants. He who is pinched with

want, will be earnest in craving an alms. He prays most fervently, who prays most feelingly. This is to sanctify the morning of a sabbath, and it is a good preparatory for the Word preached. When the ground is broken up by the plough, now it is fit to receive the seed; when the heart hath been broken by prayer, now it is fit to receive the seed of the Word preached. Thus you see how to dress your souls on a sabbath-morning. There are other duties remaining.

IV. Having thus dressed your souls in a morning, for the further sanctification of the sabbath, address yourselves to the hearing of the Word preached.

(1.) And when you are set down in your seat,

Lift up your eyes to heaven for a blessing upon the word to be dispensed, for, you must know the word preached doth not work as physic, by its own inherent virtue, but by a virtue from heaven, and the co-operation of the Holy Ghost; therefore put up a short ejaculatory prayer for a blessing upon the word, that it may be made effectual to you.

(2.) The word being begun to be preached, set yourselves in a right manner;

With reverence and holy attention, Acts xvi. 14. ‘A certain woman, named Lydia, attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.’ Constantine the emperor was noted for his reverend attention to the word, Luke xix. 48. ‘Christ taught daily in the temple: and all the people were attentive to hear him.’ In the Greek, ‘they hung upon his lip.’ Could we tell men of a rich purchase, they would diligently attend: and shall they not much more, when the gospel of grace is preaching unto them? Now, that we may sanctify and hallow the sabbath, by attentive hearing, take heed of two things, in hearing, viz. I. Distraction. II. Drowsiness.

I. *Distraction*. 1 Cor. vii. 35. ‘That ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.’ It is said of St. Bernard, that when he came to the church-door, he would say, “Stay here all my earthly thoughts.” So should we say to ourselves, when we are at the door of God’s house, Stay here all my worldly cares, and wandering cogitations; I am now going to hearken what the Lord will say to me. Distraction hinders devotion. Distraction in hearing is, when the mind is tossed with vain thoughts, and diverted from the business in hand. It is hard to make the quick-silver heart fix. St. Hierom complained of himself; “Sometimes (saith he) when I am about God’s service, *per porticus diambulo*, I am walking in the galleries, and sometimes casting up accounts.” So, oft in hearing of the word, the thoughts dance up and down; and when our eye is upon the minister, our mind is upon other things. Distracted hearing is far from sanctifying the sabbath. It must needs be very heinous



to give way to vain thoughts at this time; because, when we are hearing the word, we are now in God's special presence. To do any treasonable action in the king's presence, is high impudence, Jer. xxiii. 11. 'Yea, in my house have I found their wickedness.' So may the Lord say in my house, while they are hearing my word, I have found wickedness; they have wanton eyes, and their soul is set on vanity. This enhanceth and aggravates the sin.

*Qu. Whence do these roving distracted thoughts in hearing come?*

*Ans.* 1. Partly from Satan. The devil is no recusant he, will be sure to be present in our assemblies: if he cannot hinder us from hearing, he will hinder us in hearing, Job i. 16. 'When the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them.' The devil sets vain objects before the fancy, to cause a diversion. Satan's great design is to render the word we hear fruitless: as when one is writing, another jogs him that he cannot write even; so, when we are hearing, the devil will be jogging us with a temptation, that we should not attend to the word preached, Zech. iii. 1. 'He shewed me Joshua the high-priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right-hand to resist him.'

2. These wandering thoughts in hearing come partly from ourselves. We must not lay all the blame upon Satan.

(1.) They come from the eye. A wandering eye causeth wandering thoughts. A thief may be let into the house at a window; so vain thoughts are let in at the eye. So that, as we are bid to keep our feet when we enter into the house of God, Eccl. v. 1. so we had need make a covenant with our eyes, when we are in the house of God, Job xxxi. 1. that we be not distracted by beholding other objects.

2. Wandering thoughts in hearing rise out of the heart. These sparks come out of our own furnace. Vain thoughts are the mud which the heart (as a troubled sea) casts up, Mark vii. 12. 'For, (from within,) out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts.' It is the foulness of the stomach sends up fumes into the head; and the corruption of the heart sends up evil thoughts into the mind.

3. Distracted thoughts in hearing proceed from an evil custom. We injure ourselves to vain thoughts at other times, therefore we cannot forbear them on a sabbath. Custom is a second nature, Jer. xlii. 23. 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil?' He that is used to bad company, knows not how to leave it; such as have vain thoughts keeping them company all the week, they know not how to get rid of them on the sab-

bath. Let me shew you how evil these vain distracting thoughts in hearing are.

*First*, To have the heart distracted in hearing, is a disrespect to God's omniscience. God is an all-seeing Spirit; and thoughts speak louder in his ears, than words do in ours, Amos iv. 13. 'He declareth unto man what is his thought.' Therefore, to make no conscience of wandering thoughts in hearing, is the affronting of God's omniscience, as if he knew not our heart, or did not hear the language of our thoughts.

*Secondly*, To give way to wandering thoughts in hearing is hypocrisy. We pretend to hear what God saith, and our mind is quite upon another thing. We present God with our bodies, but do not give him our hearts, Hos. vii. 11. This hypocrisy God complains of, Isa. xxix. 13. 'This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their hearts far from me.' This is to prevaricate and deal falsely with God.

*Thirdly*, Vain thoughts in hearing discover much want of love to God. Did we love God we should listen to his words as oracles, 'and bind them upon the table of our heart,' Prov. iii. 3. When a friend whom we love speaks to us, and give us advice, we mind it with seriousness, and suck in every word. The giving our thoughts leave to ramble in holy duties, shews the defect of our love to God.

*Fourthly*, Vain impertinent thoughts in hearing defile an ordinance? they are as dead flies in the box of ointment. When a string of the lute is out of tune, it spoils the music; distraction of thought puts our mind out of tune, and makes our services sound harsh and unpleasant. Wandering thoughts poison a duty, and turn it into sin, Psal. cix. 7. 'Let his prayer become sin.' What can be worse, than to have a man's praying and hearing of the word become sin? Were it not sad, when the meat we eat should increase bad humours? So when the hearing of the word, which is the food of the soul, should be turned into sin.

*Fifthly*, Vain thoughts in hearing, anger God. If the king were speaking to one of his subjects, and he should not give heed to what the king saith, but be thinking on another business, or playing with a feather; would not this provoke the king? So, when we are in God's presence, and God is speaking to us in his word, and we minding not much what he saith, but our hearts go after covetousness, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Will not this anger God, to be thus slighted? God hath pronounced a curse upon such, Mal. i. 14. 'Curst be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing.' To have strong lively affections to the world, here is a male in the flock; but to hear the word with distraction, to

give God duties fly-blown with vain thoughts, this is to offer to the Lord a corrupt thing ; this brings a curse, ‘ cursed be the deceiver.’

*Sixthly*, Vain thoughts in hearing (when allowed and not resisted) make way for hardning the heart. A stone in the heart, is worse than in the kidneys. Distracted thoughts in hearing, do not better the heart but harden it. Vain thoughts take away the holy awe of God which should be upon the heart ; they make conscience less tender, and hinder the efficacy the word should have upon the heart.

*Seventhly*, Vain distracting thoughts rob us of the comfort of an ordinance. A gracious soul oft meets with God in the sanctuary, and can say, as Cant. iii. 4. ‘ I found him whom my soul loveth.’ He is like Jonathan, who, having tasted the honey on the rod, his eyes were enlightned. But vain thoughts hinder the comfort of an ordinance, as a black cloud hides the warm comfortable beams of the sun from us. Will God speak peace to us, when our minds are wandering and our thoughts are travelling to the ends of the earth ? Prov. xvii. 24. If ever you would hear the word with attention, do as Abraham, he drove away the fowls from the sacrifice, Gen. xv. 11. so when we find these excursions, and sinful wanderings in hearing, labour to drive away the fowls : get rid of these vain thoughts ; they are vagrants, and we must not give them entertainment.

*Qn. But how shall we get help against these vagabond thoughts ?*

*Ans.* (1.) Pray and watch against them. (2.) Let the sense of God’s omniscient eye over awe your hearts. The servant will not sport in his master’s presence. (3.) Labour for an holy frame of heart. Were the heart more spiritual, the mind would be less feathery. (4.) Bring more love to the word. That which we love, we fix our minds upon ; he that loves his pleasures and recreations, his mind is fixed upon them, and he can follow them without distraction. Were our love more set upon the word preached, our minds would be more fixed upon it : and surely there is enough to make us love the word preached ; for it is the word of life, the inlet to knowledge, the antidote against sin, the quickner of holy affections : It is the true manna, which hath all sorts of sweet tastes in it : it is the pool of Bethesda, in which the rivers of life spring forth to heal the broken in heart ; it is a sovereign elixir or cordial to revive the sorrowful spirit. Get love to the word preached and you will not be so distracted in hearing. What the heart delights in, the thoughts dwell upon.

II. If you would sanctify the sabbath by diligent, attentive hearing, take heed of drowsiness in hearing ; drowsiness shews much irreverence. How lively are many when they are about the world, but in the worship of God how drowsy, as if the de-



vil had given them some opium to make them sleep ? A drowfy temper is (now) very absurd and sinful, Are not you in prayer asking pardon of sin ? Will the prisoner fall asleep when he is begging his pardon ? In the preaching of the word, is not the bread of life broken to you : and will a man fall asleep at his food ? which is worse, to stay from a sermon, or sleep at a sermon ? While you sleep, perhaps the truth was delivered, which might have converted your souls. Besides sleeping is very offensive in these holy assemblies ; it is not only a grieving the Spirit of God, but a making the hearts of the righteous sad, Ezek. xiii. 27. It troubles them to see any shew such a contempt of God and his worship : to see them busy in the shop, but drowfy in the temple. Therefore, as Christ said, Matth. xxvi. 4. ‘ Could ye not watch one hour ? ’ so can ye not wake one hour ? I deny not but that a child of God may sometimes thro’ weakness and indisposition of body drop a sleep at a sermon, but it is not voluntary or ordinary. The sun may be in an eclipse, but not often ; if sleeping be customary and allowed, it is a very bad sign and a profaning of the ordinance. A good remedy against drowsiness is to use a spare diet upon this day. Such as indulge their appetite too much on a sabbath, are fitter to sleep on a couch, than pray in the temple. Now, that you may throw off distracting thoughts and drowsiness on the Lord’s day, and may hear the word with reverend attention, consider,

1. It is God that speaks to us in his word ; therefore the preaching of the word is called ‘ the breath of his lips,’ Isa. xi. 4. And Christ is said ‘ now to speak to us from heaven,’ Heb. xii. 25. as a king speaks in his ambassador. Ministers are but as the pipes and organs. It is the spirit of the living God breathes in them. When we come to the word, we should think thus with ourselves. God speaks in this preacher, The Thessalonians heard the word Paul preached, as if God himself had spoken unto them, 1 Theff. ii. 13. ‘ When ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God.’ When Samuel knew it ‘ was the Lord that spake to him, he lent his ear,’ 1 Sam. iii. 10. If we do not regard God, when he speaks to us, he will not regard us when we pray to him.

2. Consider, how serious and weighty the matters delivered to us are. As Moses said, Deut. xxx. 10. ‘ I call heaven and earth to record this day, that I have set before you life and death.’ Can men be regardless of the word, or drowfy when the weighty matters of eternity are set before them ? We preach of faith, and holiness of life, and the day of judgment, and the eternal recompences : here is life and death set before you : and doth not all this call for serious attention : If a letter were

read to one of special business, wherein his life and estate were concerned, would not he be very serious in listening to that letter? In the preaching of the word, your salvation is concerned; and if ever you would attend, it should be now, Deut. xxxii. 49. 'It is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.'

3. To give way to vain thoughts, and drowsiness in hearing, doth much gratify Satan. He knows, that not to mind a duty, is all one, as not to do a duty in religion. "What the heart doth not do, is not done." Therefore Christ saith of some, 'Hearing, they hear not,' Matth. xiii. 13. How could that be? because, though the word sounded in their ear, yet they minded not what was said to them, their thoughts were upon other things; therefore it was all one as if they did not hear: 'Hearing, they hear not:' and doth not this please Satan, to see men come to the word, and as good stay away? they are haunted with vain thoughts, they are taken off the duty while they are in it: their body is in the assembly, their heart in their shop: 'Hearing, they hear not.'

4. It may be the last sabbath that ever we shall keep; we may go from the place of hearing to the place of judging: and shall not we give reverend attention to the word? did we think thus when we come into God's house. Perhaps this will be the last time that ever God will counsel us about our souls; before another sermon, death's alarm will sound in our ears: with what attention and devotion should we come hither, and our affections would be all on fire in hearing?

5. You must give an account for every sermon you hear, Luke xvi. 2. *Redde rationem*; 'Give an account of thy stewardship.' So will God say, Give an account of thy hearing: hast thou been affected with the word? hast thou profited by it? and how can we give an account, if we have been distracted in hearing, and have not taken notice what hath been said to us? The Judge, to whom we must give an account, is God. Were one to give an account to man, he might falsify his accounts; but we must give an account to God, *Nec donis corrumpitur, nec blanditiis fallitur*, Bern. "He is so just a God, that, he cannot be bribed, and so wise, that he cannot be deceived." Therefore, going to give an account to such an impartial Judge, how should we observe every word preached, remembering the account? Let all this make us shake off distraction and drowsiness in hearing, and have our ears chained to the word.

## OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 8. *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy, &c.*

II. If you would hear the word aright, lay aside those things which may render the word preached ineffectual: As,

1. *Curiosity*, Some come to the word preached, not so much to get grace, as to enrich themselves with notions: 'Itching ears,' 2 Tim. iv. 3. Austin confesseth, 'That, before his conversion, he went to hear St. Ambrose, rather for his eloquence, than for the spirituality of the matter, Ezek. xxxiii. 32. 'Thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument.' Many come to the word only to feast their ears; they like the melody of the voice, the mellifluous sweetness of the expression, the newness of the notion, Acts xvii. 21. This is to love the garnishing of the dish more than the food; this is to desire to be pleased, rather than edified. Like a woman that paints her face, but neglects her health: so they paint and adorn themselves with curious speculations, but neglect their souls health. This hearing doth neither sanctify the heart, nor the sabbath.

2. Lay aside *prejudice*.

(1.) Prejudice against the truths preached. The Sadducees were prejudiced against the doctrine of the resurrection, Luke xx. 27.

(2.) Prejudiced against the person preaching, 1 Kings xxii. 8. 'There's one Micaiah by whom we may enquire of the Lord, but I hate him.' This hinders the virtue of the word. If a patient hath an ill opinion of his physician, he will not take any of his receipts, tho' never so good. Prejudice in the mind is like an obstruction in the stomach, which hinders the nutritive virtue of the meat. Prejudice poisons the word, and makes it lose its efficacy.

3. Lay aside *covetousness*. Covetousness is not only getting the world unjustly, but loving it inordinately. This is a great hindrance to the word preached. The seed which fell among thorns was choked, Matth. xiii. 22. An emblem of the word being preached to a covetous hearer. The covetous man is thinking on the world when he is hearing; his heart is in his shop, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 'They sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.' A covetous hearer derides the word, Luke xvi. 14. 'The Pharisees, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him.'



4. Lay aside *partiality*. Partiality in hearing is, when we like to hear some truths preached, but not all. We love to hear of heaven, but not of self-denial; of reigning with Christ, but not of suffering; of the more facile duties of religion, but not them which are more knotty and difficult; as mortification, laying the ax to the root, and hewing down their beloved sin, Isa. xxx. 10. 'Prophecy smooth things,' such as may not grate upon our conscience. Many like to hear of the love of Christ, but not of loving their enemies; they like the comforts of the word, but not the reproofs. Herod heard John Baptist gladly; he liked many truths, but not when he spake against his incest. Lay aside partiality.

5. Lay aside *censoriousness*. Some, instead of judging themselves for sin, sit as judges upon the preacher: either his sermon had too much gall in it, or it was too long. These will sooner censure a sermon than practise it. God will judge the judger, Matth. vii. 1.

6. Lay aside *disobedience*, Rom. vii. 22. 'All the day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient people.' 'Tis spoken of the Jews; God stretched out his hands in the preaching of the word, but they rejected Christ. Let there be none among you that wilfully refuse the counsels of the word; it is sad to have an adder's ear, and an adamant heart, Zech. vii. 11, 12. If, when God speaks to us in his word we are deaf; when we speak to him in prayer, he will be dumb.

III. If you would hear the word aright, have good ends in hearing; 'Come to the word to be made better.' Some have no other end in hearing, but because it is in fashion, or to gain repute, or stop the mouth of conscience; but come to the word, to be made more holy. There's a great deal of difference between one that goes to a garden for flowers to wear in her bosom, and another that goes for flowers to make syrups and medicines of. We should go to the word for a medicine to cure us; as Naaman the Syrian went to Jordan to be healed of his leprosy, 1 Peter ii. 2. 'Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.' Come to the word to be changed into the similitude of it; as the seal leaves its print upon the wax, so labour that the word preached may leave the print of its own holiness upon your heart; labour that the 'word' may have such a virtue upon you, as the water of jealousy, 'to kill and make fruitful,' Numb. v. 27. That it may kill your sins, and make your souls fruitful in grace.

IV. If you would hear the word aright, come to it with delight. The word preached is a feast of fat things: with what delight do men come to a feast? the word preached anoints the blind eye, mollifies the rocky heart; it beats off our fetters, and turns us from the 'power of Satan to God,' Acts xxvi. 18. The

word is the seed of regeneration, James i. 18. the engine of salvation. Hear the word with delight and complacency, Jer. xv. 16. 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them. They were the joy and rejoicing of my heart.' Psal. cxix. 103. 'How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth.' Yea, love that word which comes most home to the conscience: bless God when your corruptions have been met with, when the sword of the Spirit hath divided between you and your sins. Who cares for that physic which will not work.

V. If you would hear the word aright, mix it with faith. Believe the verity of the word preached, that it is that word by which you must be judged; not only give evidence to the word preached, but learn to apply it to your own souls: faith concocts the word, and turns it into spiritual nourishment. Many hear the word, but it may be said of them, as Psal. cvi. 24. 'They believed not his word.' Melancthon once said to some of the Italians, "Ye Italians worship God in the bread, when ye do not believe him to be in heaven:" so, many hear God's word, but do not believe that God is; they question the truth of his oracles. If we do not mix faith with the word, it is like leaving out the chief ingredient in a medicine, which makes it ineffectual: unbelief hardens men's hearts against the word, Acts xix. 9. 'Divers were hardened, and believed not.' Men hear many truths delivered concerning the preciousness of Christ, the beauty of holiness, the felicity of a glorified estate; but, if through unbelief and atheism they question these truths, we may as well speak to the stones and pillars of the church as to them. That word which is not believed, can never be practised. *Ubi male creditur, ibi nec bene vivitur*, Hierom. Unbelief makes the word preached of no effect. Heb. ix. 2. 'The word preached did not profit, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.' The word to an unbeliever is like *dioſcordium* put into a dead man's mouth, which loseth all its virtue. If there be any unbelievers in our congregations, what shall ministers say to God at the last day? Lord, we have preached to the people, thou sentest us to, we shewed them our commission, we declared unto them the whole counsel of God, but they believed never a word we spake: we told them what would be the fruit of sin, but they would drink their sugared draught, though there was death in the cup: Lord, we are free from their blood. God forbid that ever ministers should make this report to God of their people. But this they must be forced to do, if people live and die in unbelief. Would you sanctify a sabbath in hearing the word aright? hear the word with faith. The apostle puts these two together, 'belief and salvation,' Heb. x. 39. 'We are of them that believe to the saving of the soul.'

VI. If you would hear the word aright, hear it with ‘ meek spirits,’ James i. 21. Receive the word *in mansuetudine*, with meekness. Meekness is a submissive frame of heart to the word: contrary to this meekness is fierceness of spirit, when men rise up in a rage against the word; as if the patient should be angry with the physician when he gives him a receipt to purge out his bad humours, Acts vii. 54. ‘ When they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and gnashed on Stephen with their teeth.’ 2 Chron. xvi. 10. ‘ Aśa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison-house.’ Pride and guilt make men fret at his word: what made Aśa storm so, but pride? he was a king, and thought he was too good to be told of his sin. What made Cain so angry, when God said to him, ‘ Where is Abel thy brother?’ Saith he, ‘ Am I my brother’s keeper?’ What made him so touchy, but guilt? he had embred his hands in his brother’s blood. If you would hear the word aright, lay down your passions, ‘ Receive the word with meekness:’ get humble hearts to submit to the truths delivered. God takes the meek person to be his scholar, Psal. xxv. 9. ‘ The meek will he teach his way.’ Meekness makes the word preached to be an ‘ ingrafted word,’ James i. 21. A good scion grafted in a bad stock changeth the nature of it, and makes it bear good and generous fruit; so when the word preached is grafted into man’s heart, it sanctifies them, and makes them bring forth the sweet fruits of righteousness. By meekness it becomes an ingrafted word.

VII. If you would hear the word aright, be not only attentive, but retentive. Lay the word up in your memories and hearts, Luke viii. 15. ‘ The seed on the good ground are they, who having heard the word, keep it.’ The Greek word for ‘ to keep,’ signifies ‘ to hold the word fast, that it do not run from us.’ If the seed be not kept in the ground, but is presently washed away, it is sown to little purpose: so if the word preached be not kept in your memories and hearts, it is preached in vain. Many people have memories like leaky vessels, the word goes out as fast as it comes in, how can it profit? if a treasure be put in a chest, and the chest be not locked, it may easily be taken out: a bad memory is like a chest without a lock, the devil can easily take out all the treasure, Luke viii. 22. ‘ Then comes the devil, and takes away the word out of their hearts.’ Labour to keep in memory the truths you hear: the things we esteem we are not so apt to forget. ‘ Will a bride forget her jewels?’ Jer. ii. 32. ‘ Can a maid forget her ornaments?’ Did we prize the word more, we should not so soon forget it: if the meat doth not stay in the stomach, but comes up as fast as we eat it, it cannot nourish: so, if the word stays not in the memory, but is presently gone, it can do the soul but little good.



VIII. If you would hear aright, practise what you hear. Practice is the life of all, Rev. xxii. 14. 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.' Bare hearing will be no plea at the day of judgment; Lord, I have heard so many sermons. But God will say, What fruits of obedience have ye brought forth? The word we preach is not only to inform you, but reform you; not only to mend your sight, but to mend your pace in the way to heaven: a good hearer is like the *heliotropium* &c. it opens and shuts with the sun, to God against sin. Now, that you may sanctify a sabbath by hearing:

1. If you do not hear the word aright, you lose all your labour: how many a weary step have you taken; your body hath been crowded, your spirit faint; if you are not bettered by hearing; if you are as proud, as vain, as earthly as ever, all your hearing is lost. You would be loth to trade in vain; and why not as well to hear sermons in vain? Job ix. 29. 'Why then labour I in vain?' Put this question to thy own soul? 'Why labour I in vain?' why do I take all this pains to hear, yet have not the grace to practise it? I am as bad as ever? why then labour I in vain?

2. If you hear the word, and are not bettered by it, you are like the salamander in the fire, not hotter; your hearing will increase your condemnation, Luke xii. 47. 'That servant which knew his Lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.' We pity such as know not where to hear; it will be worse with such as care not how they hear. To graceless disobedient hearers every sermon will be a faggot to heat hell: it is sad to go loaded to hell with ordinances. O beg the Spirit to make the word preached effectual. Ministers can but speak to the ear, the Spirit speaks to the heart, Acts x. 44. 'While Peter spake, the Holy Ghost fell upon all them that heard the word.'

IX. Having heard the word in an holy and spiritual manner, for the further sanctification of the sabbath, confer of the word. We are forbidden on this day to speak our own words, Isa. lviii. 14. but we must speak of God's word. Speak of the sermons as you sit together; this is one part of sanctifying the sabbath. Good discourse brings holy truths into our memories, and fastens them upon our hearts; Mal. iii. 17. 'Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.' There is a great power and efficacy in good discourse, Job vi. 25. 'How forcible are right words?' By holy conference on a sabbath, one Christian helps to warm another when he is frozen, to strengthen another when he is weak. Latimer confessed, he was much furthered in religion, by having conference with Mr. Bilny the martyr. Psal. cxxix. 172. 'My tongue shall speak of thy word.' One

reason why preaching the word on a sabbath doth no more good, is, because there is so little good conference. Few speak of the word they have heard, as if sermons were such secrets that they must not be spoken of again, or as if it were a shame to speak of that which will save us.

X. Shut up the sabbath evening with repetition, reading, singing of psalms, and prayer: beg that God would bless the word you have heard. But I hope your practice herein will prevent my further speaking. Could we but thus spend a sabbath, we might be 'in the Spirit on the Lord's day,' Rev. i. 10. our souls might be nourished and comforted: and this sabbath which we now keep, would be an earnest of that everlasting sabbath which we shall celebrate in heaven.

EXOD. xx. 8. *Remember to keep the Sabbath-day holy.*

*Use I.* SEE here a Christian's duty, 'To keep the sabbath-day holy.'

1. The whole sabbath is to be dedicated to God. It is not said, Keep a part of the sabbath holy, but the whole day must be religiously observed. If God hath given us six days and taken but one to himself, shall we grudge him any part of that day? it were sacrilege. The Jews kept a whole day to the Lord, and we are not to abridge or curtail the sabbath (saith St. Austin) more than the Jews did. The very heathens, by the light of nature, did set apart a whole day in the honour of their false gods; and Scævola the high-priest did affirm, That the wilful transgression of that day could have no expiation or pardon. Whosoever do rob any part of the sabbath for servile work or recreation, Scævola, the high-priest of the heathenish gods, shall rise up in judgment against such Christians, and condemn them. And they who say, that to keep a whole sabbath is too Judaical, let them shew where God has made any abatement of the time of worship. Where he hath said, you shall keep but a part of the sabbath: and if they cannot shew that, it argues much boldness to go to rob God of his due. That a whole day be designed and set a part for God's special worship, is a perpetual statute, while the church remains upon the earth, saith Pet. Martyr. Of this opinion also were Theodoret, Austin, Iræneus, and the chief of the fathers.

2. As the whole sabbath is to be dedicated to God, so it must be kept holy; you see the manner of sanctifying the Lord's day, 'by reading, meditation, prayer, hearing of the word, and by singing of psalms, to make melody to the Lord.' Now, besides what I have said for the keeping this day holy, let me make a

comment or paraphrase on that scripture, Isa. lviii. 13. 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thy own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:' Here is a description of the right sanctifying a sabbath.

(1.) 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath.' That may be understood either literally or spiritually.

*First*, Literally, 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath,' that is, if thou withdrawest thy foot from taking long walks or journeys on the sabbath-day: So the Jewish doctors expound it. Or,

*Secondly*, Spiritually. 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath,' that is, if thou turn away thy affections (the feet of thy soul) from inclining to any worldly business.

(2.) 'From doing thy pleasure on my holy day,' that is, thou must not do that which may please the carnal part, as sports and pastimes: this is to do the devil's work on God's day.

(3.) 'And call the sabbath a delight.' Call it a delight, that is, esteem it so: though the sabbath be not a day for carnal pleasure, yet holy pleasure is not forbidden. The soul must take pleasure in the duties of a sabbath. The saints of old counted the sabbath a delight: the Jews called the sabbath *dies lucis*, a day of light. The Lord's day, on which the Sun of Righteousness shines, is both a day of light and delight. This is the day of sweet intercourse between God and the soul. On this day a Christian makes his sallies out to heaven, his soul is lifted above the earth: and can this be without delight? The higher the bird flies, the sweeter it sings. On a sabbath the soul acts its love to God; and where the love is, there is the delight: on this day a believer's heart is melted, *q. d.* quickened, enlarged in holy duties; and how can all this be, and not a secret delight go along with it? On a sabbath, a gracious soul can say, as Cant. ii. 3. 'I sat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.' How can a spiritual heart chuse but call the sabbath a delight? Is it not delightful to a queen to be putting on her wedding robes, in which she shall meet the king her bridegroom? When we are about sabbath exercises, we are dressing ourselves, and putting on our wedding robes, in which we are to meet our heavenly bridegroom, the Lord Jesus: and is not this delightful? On the sabbath God makes a feast of fat things; he feasts the ear with his word, and the heart with his grace. Well then may we call the sabbath a delight: and to find this holy delight, is to 'be in the Spirit on the Lord's day.'

(4.) 'The holy of the Lord, honourable.' In the Hebrew, it is *glorious*. To call the sabbath honourable, is not to be under-



flood so much of an outward honour given to it, by wearing richer apparel, or having better diet on this day, as the Jewish doctors corruptly gloss; this is the chief honour some give to this day: but thou shalt call the sabbath honourable, that is meant of the honour of the heart that we give to this day, reverencing it, and esteeming it the queen of days. We are to count the sabbath honourable, because God hath honoured it. All the persons in the Trinity have honoured it; God the Father blessed it, God the Son rose upon it, God the Holy Ghost descended on this day, Acts ii. 1. And indeed this day is to be honoured of all good Christians, and had in high veneration. It is a day of renown; on this day a golden sceptre of mercy is held forth. The Christian sabbath is the very *crepusculum* and dawning of the heavenly sabbath. It is honourable because this day, 'God comes down to us, and visits us.' To have the King of heaven present in a special manner in our assemblies, makes the sabbath-day honourable. Besides, the work that is done on this day makes it honourable: the six days are filled up with servile work, which makes them lose much of their glory; but on this day sacred work is done. The soul is employed wholly about the worship of God; it is praying, hearing, meditating; it is doing angels work, praising, and blessing God. Again, the day is honourable by virtue of a divine institution: silver is of itself valuable; but when the royal stamp is put upon it, it is honourable; so God hath put a sacred stamp upon this day, the stamp of divine authority, and the stamp of divine benediction: this makes it honourable; this is a sanctifying the sabbath, to call it a delight, and honourable.

(5.) 'Not doing thy own ways.' That is, thou shalt not defile the day by doing any servile work.

(6.) 'Nor finding thy own pleasure.' That is, not gratifying the fleshly part, by walks, visits, or pastimes.

(7.) 'Nor speaking thy own words.' That is, words heterogeneous and unsuitable for a sabbath; vain, impertinent words; discourses of worldly affairs. Here is the sanctifying of a sabbath described.

Use II. If the sabbath-day be to be kept holy, it reproves them, who, instead of sanctifying the sabbath, profane it: They take that time, which should be dedicated wholly to God, and spend it in the service of the devil and their lusts. The Lord hath enclosed this day for his own worship, and they lay this day common. God hath set an hedge about this commandment, 'Remember;' and they break this hedge; but he who breaks an 'hedge, a serpent shall bite him,' Eccl. x. 8. The sabbath-day in England lies bleeding: and oh that our parliament would pour in some balm into the wounds which the sabbath hath received! how is this day profaned, by sitting idle at

home, by selling meat, by vain discourse, by sinful visits, by walking in the fields, by using sports. The people of Israel might not gather manna on the sabbath, and may we use sports and dancings on this day? Truly it should be matter of grief to us, to see so much sabbath-profanation. When one of Darius' eunuchs saw Alexander setting his feet on a rich table of Darius', he fell a weeping; Alexander asked him why he wept? He said it was to see the table which his master so highly esteemed to be now made a foot-stool. So we may weep to see the sabbath-day, which God so highly esteems, and hath so honoured and blessed, to be made a foot-stool, and to be trampled upon by the feet of sinners. To profane the sabbath, is a sin of an high nature; it is a wilful contempt of God; it is not only a casting God's law behind our back, but a trampling it under foot. God saith 'keep the sabbath holy;' but men will pollute it. This is to despise God, to hang out a flag of defiance, to throw down the gauntlet, and challenge God himself. Now, how can God endure to be thus saucily confronted by proud dust? God will not suffer this high impudence to go unpunished. This will draw God's curses upon the sabbath-breaker, and God's curse will blast where it comes. No sooner did Christ curse the fig-tree, but it withered; though the law of the land lets sabbath-breakers alone. To rob a man of his purse, shall be punished with death; but to rob God of his day, shall not be punished with death. But God will take the matter into his own hand; he will see after the punishing of sabbath-violation; and how doth he punish it?

1. With spiritual plagues. He gives up sabbath-profaners to hardness of heart, and a seared conscience. Spiritual judgments are foretold, Ps. lxxxix. 12. 'So I gave them up to their own hearts lusts.' A fear in the conscience is a brand-mark of reprobation.

2. God punisheth this sin of sabbath-breaking, by giving them up to commit other sins. God, to revenge the breaking of his sabbath, suffers men to break open houses, and so come to be punished by the magistrate. How many such confessions have we heard from thieves going to be executed! they never regarded the sabbath, and so God suffered them to commit those heinous sins, for which now they are to die.

3. God punisheth sabbath-breaking, by sudden visible judgments on men for this sin; God punisheth them in their estates, and in their persons. One carrying corn into his barn on the Lord's day, both house and corn were consumed with fire from heaven. In Wiltshire there was a dancing match appointed upon the Lord's day; and one of the company, as he was dancing, fell down dead suddenly, and so was made a spectacle of God's justice. The theatre of God's judgments relates of one,

who used every Lord's day to hunt in sermon-time, and he had a child by his wife with an head like a dog, and it cried like a hound. His sin was monstrous, and it was punished with a monstrous birth. The Lord threatened the Jews, that if they would not hallow the sabbath-day, he would kindle a 'fire in their gates,' Jer. xvii. 27. The dreadful fire which brake out in London, began on the sabbath day; as if God would tell us from heaven, he was then punishing us for our sabbath profanation. Nor doth God punish it only in this life with death, but with damnation. Such as break God's sabbath, let them see if they can break those chains of darkness, in which they and the devils shall be held.

*Use III.* It exhorts us to sabbath-holiness.

1. Make conscience of keeping this day holy. The other commandments have only an affirmative in them, or a negative: this fourth commandment hath both an affirmative in it, and a negative; 'Thou shalt keep the sabbath-day holy,' and 'thou shalt not do any manner of work in it:' to shew how carefully God would have us observe this day. Not only must you keep this day yourselves, but have a care that all under your charge keep it; 'thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maid-servant;' that is, thou who art a superior, a parent, or a master, thou must have a care that not only thyself sanctify the day, but those who are under thy trust and tuition. To blame are those masters of families, who are careful that their servants serve them, but have no care that they serve God; they care not though their servants should serve the devil, so long as their bodies do them service. That which St. Paul saith to Timothy, 1 Tim. vi. 20. *Serva depositum*, 'Keep that which is committed to thy trust,' is of a large extension. Not only have a care of thy own soul, but have a care of the souls thou art entrusted with. See that they who are under thy charge sanctify the sabbath. God's law provided, that if a man met with an ox or an ass going astray, he should bring him back again: much more, when thou seest the soul of thy child or servant going astray from God, and breaking his sabbath, thou shouldest bring him back again to a religious observation of this day. Now, that I may press you to sabbath-sanctification, consider,

(1.) God hath promised great blessings to the strict observers of this day. 1. A promise of joy. If this be a delight, Isa. lviii. 14. 'Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord.' Delighting in God is both a duty, Ps. xxxvii. 4. and a reward. In this text, it is a reward, 'Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord:' as if God had said, if thou keep the sabbath conscientiously, I will give thee that which will fill thee with delight; if thou keep the sabbath willingly, I will make thee keep



it joyfully : I will give thee those enlargements in duty, and that inward comfort, which shall abundantly satisfy thee ; thy soul shall overflow with such a stream of joy, that thou shalt say, Lord, in keeping thy sabbath there is great rewards. 2. Of honour. And, ‘ I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth.’ That is, I will advance thee to honour, *ascendere faciam* ; So Munster interprets it. Some, by the high places of the earth, understand Judea : So Grotius, I will bring thee into the land of Judea, which is higher situated than the other countries adjacent. 3. Of earth and heaven, ‘ And I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob ;’ that is, I will feed thee with all the delicious things of Canaan, and afterwards I’ll translate thee to heaven, whereof Canaan was but a type.— And another promise, Isa. lvi. 2. ‘ Blessed is the man that doth this, that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it.’ ‘ Blessed is the man ;’ in the Hebrew, it is, blessedness. To him that keeps the sabbath holy, here is blessedness upon blessedness belongs to him ; he shall be blessed with the upper and nether springs ; he shall be blessed in his name, estate, soul, progeny. Who would not keep this sabbath from polluting it, that shall have so many blessings entailed upon him and his posterity after him ?

(2.) A conscientious keeping the sabbath, seasons the heart for God’s service all the week after. Christian, the more holy thou art on a sabbath, the more holy thou wilt be on the week following.

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## OF THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

**EXOD. xx. 12.** *Honour thy Father and thy Mother : that thy Days may be long upon the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

HAVING done with the first table, I am next to speak of the duties of the second table. The commandments may be likened to Jacob’s ladder ; the first table, as the top of his ladder, reacheth to heaven ; it respects God : the second table, as the foot of the ladder, rests on the earth : it respects superiors and inferiors. By the first table, we walk religiously towards God ; by the second, we walk religiously towards man. He cannot be good in the first table that is bad in the second. ‘ Honour thy father and thy mother.’

In this, (1.) A command, ‘ Honour thy father and thy mother.’

(2.) A reason annexed to it, 'That thy days may be long in the land.'

1. The command, 'Honour thy father.'

Qu. *Who is meant here by father?*

Ans. Father is taken several ways; the political, ancient, spiritual, æconomical, natural.

1. The political father, the magistrate. He is the father of his country; he is to be an encourager of virtue, a punisher of vice, a father to the widow and orphan: such a father was Job, ch. xxix. 16. 'I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not, I searched out.' And, as magistrates are fathers, so especially the king, who is the head of magistrates, is a political father: he is placed as the sun among the lesser stars. The scripture calls kings 'father,' Isa. xlix. 23. 'Kings shall be thy nursing fathers.' They are to nurse up their subjects in piety, by their good edicts and examples; and to nurse them up in peace and plenty. Such nursing fathers were David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Constantine, Theodosius. It is happy for a people who have such nursing fathers, whose breasts nurse comfort to their children. These fathers are to be honoured; for,

(1.) Their places deserve honour, God hath set these political fathers to preserve order and harmony in a nation, and to prevent those state-convulsions, which otherwise might ensue, Judges xvii. 6. When there was no king in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes. A wonder, Prov. xxx. 27.

(2.) God hath promoted kings, that they may promote justice. As they have a sword in their hand, to signify their power; so a sceptre, an emblem of justice. It is said of Marcus Aurelius, emperor, that he allotted one hour of the day to hear the complaints of such as were oppressed. Kings place judges as cherubims about the throne, for distribution of justice. These political fathers are to be honoured; 'Honour the king,' 1 Pet. ii. 17. And this honour is to be shewn by a civil respect to their persons, and a cheerful submission to their laws, so far as they agree and run parallel with God's law. Kings are to be prayed for, which is a part of that honour we give them, 1 Tim. ii. 1. 'I exhort that supplications, prayers, intercessions, be made for kings, that we may lead a quiet, peaceable life under them, in all godliness and honesty.' We are to pray for kings, that God would honour them to be blessings, that under them we may enjoy the gospel of peace, and the peace of the gospel. How happy was the reign of Numa Pompilius, when the swords were beaten into plough shares, and the bees made their hives of the soldiers helmets!

*Secondly,* There is the grave ancient father, who is venerable

for old age ; whose grey hairs are resembled to the white flowers of the almond-tree, Eccl. xii. 5. These are fathers for *seniority*, on whose wrinkled brows, and in the furrows of whose cheeks is pictured the map of old age. These fathers are to be honoured, Lev. xix. 32. ‘Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man.’ Especially, those are to be honoured who are fathers not only for their seniority, but their piety ; whose souls are flourishing, when their bodies are a decaying. ‘Tis a blessed sight to see springs of grace in the autumn of old age ; to see men stooping towards the grave, yet going up the hill of God ; to see them lose their colour, yet keep their favour. Such, whose silver hairs are crowned with righteousness, are worthy of double honour : they are to be honoured, not only as pieces of antiquity, but as patterns of virtue. If you see an old man fearing God, whose grace shines brightest when the sun of his life is setting, O honour him as a father, by reverencing and imitating him.

*Thirdly*, There are spiritual fathers, as *pastors* and *ministers*. These are the instruments of the *New-birth*, 1 Cor. iv. 15. ‘Though ye have ten thousand instructors, yet have ye not many fathers ; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.’ The spiritual fathers are to be honoured,

1. In respect of their *office*. Whatever their persons are, their office is honourable ; they are the ‘Messengers of the Lord of Hosts,’ Mal. ii. 7. They represent no less than God himself, 2 Cor. v. 20. ‘Now then we are ambassadors for Christ.’ Jesus Christ was of this calling ; he had his mission and sanction from heaven, John viii. 18. and this crowns the ministerial calling with honour.

2. *Ministers*, these spiritual fathers, are to be ‘honoured for their work’s sake ;’ they come, like the dove, with an olive branch in their mouth : they ‘preach glad tidings of peace :’ their work is ‘to save souls.’ Other callings have only to do with men’s bodies or estates, but the minister’s calling is employed about the souls of men. Their work is to redeem spiritual captives, and turn men ‘from the power of Satan to God,’ Acts xxvi. 10. Their work is ‘to enlighten them who sit in the region of darkness,’ and make them shine as stars in the ‘kingdom of heaven.’ These spiritual fathers are to be ‘honoured for their work’s sake,’ and this honour is to be shewn three ways,

1. By giving them respect, 1 Theff. v. 12. ‘Know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.’ I confess the scandalous lives of some ministers, have been a great reproach, and have made the ‘offering of the Lord to be abhorred in some places of the land.’ The leper in the law was to have



his lip covered ; such as are angels by office, but lepers in their lives, ought to have their lips covered, and to be silenced. But though some deserve ‘ no honour,’ yet such as are faithful, and make it their work to bring souls to Christ, are to be revered as spiritual fathers. Obadiah honoured the prophet Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 17. Why did God reckon the tribe of Levi for the first born? Numb. iii. 12. Why did he appoint that the prince should ask counsel of God by the priest? Numb. xxvii. 21. Why did the Lord shew, by that miracle of ‘ Aaron’s rod flourishing,’ that he had chosen the tribe of ‘ Levi to minister before him?’ Numb. xvii. Why doth Christ call his apostles ‘ the light of the world?’ Why doth he say to all his ministers, ‘ Lo, I am with you to the end of the world ;’ but because he would have these spiritual fathers revered? In ancient times the Egyptians chose their kings out of their priests. They are far from shewing this respect and honour to their spiritual fathers, who have slight thoughts of such as have the charge of the sanctuary, and do minister before the Lord. Know them, saith the apostle, ‘ which labour among you.’ Many can be content to know their ministers in their infirmities, and are glad when they have any thing against them; but do not know them in the apostle’s sense, so as to give them ‘ double honour.’ Surely, were it not for the ministry, you would not be a vineyard, but a desert: were it not for the ministry, you would be destitute of the two seals of the covenant, baptism and the Lord’s supper; you would be infidels; ‘ For faith comes by hearing; and how shall they hear without a preacher,’ Rom. x. 14.

2. Honour the ministers, these spiritual fathers, by becoming *advocates* for them, and wiping off those slanders and calumnies which are unjustly cast upon them, 1 Tim. v. 19. Constantine was a great honourer of the ministry; he vindicated them; he would not read the envious accusations brought in against them, but did burn them. Do the ministers open their mouths to God for you in prayer, and will not you open your mouths in their behalf? Surely, if they labour to preserve you from hell, you should preserve them from slander; if they labour to save your souls, you ought to save their credit.

3. Honour them, by conforming to their doctrine. This is the greatest honour you can put upon your spiritual fathers, by believing and obeying their doctrine. He is an honourer of the ministry, who is not only an hearer, but a follower of the word. As disobedience reproacheth the ministry, so obedience honour-eth it. The apostle calls the Thessalonians his crown, 1 Thess. ii. 19. ‘ What is our crown of rejoicing, are not ye?’ A thriving people are a minister’s crown, when there is a metamorphoses, a change wrought: people came to the word proud, but they go away humble; they came earthly, but they go away heaven-

ly ; they came, as Naaman to Jordan, lepers ; but they go away healed. This is an honour to the ministry, 2 Cor. iii. 1. ‘ Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation ?’ Though other ministers might need letters of commendation, yet Paul needed none : for, when men should hear of the obedience of these Corinthians, which was wrought in them by Paul’s preaching ; this was a sufficient certificate for him, that God had blessed his labours. The Corinthians were a sufficient honour to him ; they were his letters-testimonial. You cannot honour your spiritual fathers more, than by thriving under their ministry, and living upon those sermons which they preach.

*Fourthly*, There is the *æconomical father*, that is, the master : he is *pater familias*, the father of the family ; therefore Naaman’s servants called their master, father, 2 Kings v. 13. And the centurion calls his servant, son, Matth. viii. 6. The servant is to honour his master, as the father of the family. Tho’ the master be not so exactly qualified as he should ; yet the servant must not neglect his duty, but shew some kind of honour to him.

(1.) In *obeying* his master in *licitis & honestis*, in things that are lawful and honest, 1 Pet. ii. 18. ‘ Servants, be subject to your masters ; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.’ God hath no where given a charter of exemption to free you from your duty. You cannot disobey your earthly master, but you disobey your master in heaven. Think not that birth, or high parts, no, nor yet your grace will exempt you from obedience to your master : to obey him, is an ordinance of God ; and the apostle saith, ‘ Whosoever resisteth the ordinance, shall receive to themselves damnation,’ Rom. xiii. 2.

(2.) The servant’s honouring of his master, (his *æconomical father*) is seen in being diligent in his service. Apelles painted a servant with his hands full of tools, an emblem of diligence. The loitering servant is a kind of thief ; though he doth not steal from his master’s goods, yet he steals that time which he should have employed in his master’s service. The slothful servant is called a ‘ wicked servant,’ Matth. xxv. 26.

(3.) The servant is to honour his master, who is his family-father, by being *faithful*, Matth. xxiv. 45. ‘ Who then is a faithful and wise servant ?’ Faithfulness is the chief thing in a servant. This faithfulness in a servant is seen in six things ; 1<sup>st</sup>, In *tenaciousness* in concealing the secrets your master hath intrusted you with : If those secrets are not sins, you ought to promise privacy. What is whispered in your ear you are not to publish on the house-top ; such servants are spies. Who would keep a glass that is cracked ? who would keep a servant that has a crack in his brain, and cannot keep a secret ? 2<sup>dly</sup>, Faithful-

ness in a servant is seen in *designing* the master's advantage. A faithful servant esteems his master's good as his own. Such a good servant had Abraham; when his master sent him to transact business for him, he was as careful about it, as if it had been his own, Gen. xxiv. 12. 'O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.' Doubtless Abraham's servant was as glad he had got a wife for his master's son, as if he had got a wife for himself. *3dly*, Faithfulness in a servant is seen in *standing up for the honour* of his master. When he hears him spoken against, he must vindicate him. As the master is careful of the servant's body, so the servant should be careful of the master's name: when the master is unjustly reproached, the servant cannot be excused if he be possessed with a dumb devil. *4thly*, Faithfulness is, when a servant "is true to his word." He dares not tell a lie, but will speak the truth, though it be against himself. A lie doubles the sin, Psal. ci. 7. 'He that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight.' A liar is near a kin to the devil, John viii. 44. And who would let any of the devil's kindred live with him? The lie that Gehazi told his master Elisha, entailed leprosy on Gehazi and his seed for ever, 2 Kings v. 22. A faithful servant, his tongue is the true index of his heart. *5thly*, Faithfulness is, when a servant is against *impropriation*. He dares not convert his master's goods to his own use, Tit. ii. 10. 'Not purloining.' What a servant filcheth from his master, is damnable gain.—The servant who enricheth himself by stealing from his master, stuffeth his pillow with thorns, and his head will lie very uneasy when he comes to die. *6thly*, Faithfulness is in preserving the master's person, if unjustly in danger. Bannister, who betrayed his master the Duke of Buckingham, in King Richard the Third's reign; it is remarkable how the judgments of God beset that traitorous servant: his eldest son ran mad: his daughter, of a singular beauty, was suddenly struck with leprosy; his younger son was drowned, and he himself arraigned, and had been executed, had he not been saved by his clergy. That servant who is not true to his master, will never be true to God or his own soul.

(4.) The servant is to *honour* his master, by serving him, as with *love* (for willingness is more than the work) so with *silence*, that is, without repining, and without replying, Tit. ii. 9. 'Exhort servants to be obedient to their masters, not answering again,' Gr. "not giving cross answers." Some servants are quick at speech, though slow at work; and instead of being sorry for a fault, they provoke by unbecoming language; were the heart more humble, the tongue would be more silent. They are the apostle's words, 'not answering again.' And to those servants who do thus honour their masters, or family-fathers,



by submission, diligence, faithfulness, love, and humble silence, for their encouragement let them take that, ' Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ,' Col. iii. 24. In serving your masters, you serve Christ, and he will not let you lose your labour, ye shall receive the ' reward of the inheritance.' From serving on earth, you shall be taken up to reign in heaven, and shall sit with Christ upon his throne, Rev. iii. 21.

EXOD. xx. 12. *Honour thy Father and thy Mother, &c.*

IF we are not just, we cannot be holy.—Having shewn you how servants are to honour their masters, the fathers of families; I shall next shew how masters are to carry it towards their servants, that they may gain honour from them.

1. In general, masters must remember that they have a master in heaven, who will call them to account, Eph. vi. 9. ' Knowing that your Master also is in heaven.'

2. More particularly.

(1.) Masters must have a care to provide for their servants: as they cut them out work, so they must give them their meat in due season, Luke xvii. 7. And the food should be wholesome and sufficing. It is an unworthy thing in some governors of families, to lay out so much upon their own back, as to pinch their servants' bellies.

(2.) Masters should encourage their servants in their work, by commending them when they do well: though a master is to tell a servant of his faults, yet he is not always to beat upon one string, but sometimes take notice of that which is praiseworthy. This makes a servant more cheerful in his work, and gains the master love from his servant.

(3.) Masters must not overburden their servants, but proportion their work to their strength; if you lay too much load on a servant he will faint under it. Christianity teacheth compassion.

(4.) Masters must endeavour the spiritual good of their servants, they must be seraphims to kindle their love to religion; they must be monitors to put them in mind of their souls, they must bring them to ' the pool of the sanctuary, waiting till the angel stir the waters,' John v. 4. They must seek God for them, that their servants may be his servants; they must allow them time convenient for secret devotion. Some masters are cruel to the souls of their servants, they look that they do their

work about the house, but abridge them of time they should employ in working out salvation.

(5.) Masters should use mild gentle behaviour towards servants, Eph. vi. 9. 'Forbearing threatening,' Lev. xxv. 43. 'Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, but fear thy God.' It requires wisdom in a master to know how to keep up his authority, yet lay down his austerity: we have a *good copy* to write after; our Master in heaven is 'slow to anger, and of great mercy,' Psal. cxlv. 8. Some masters are so harsh and implacable, that they are enough to spoil a good servant.

(6.) Be very exact and punctual in the compacts and agreements you make with your servants; do not prevaricate, keep not back any of their wages, nor deal deceitfully with them, as Laban did with Jacob, 'changing his wages,' Gen. xxxi. 7. Falseness in promise is as bad as false weights.

(7.) Be careful of your servants, not only in health but in sickness. They have got their sickness in your service; use what means you can for their recovery; be not like the Amalekite, 'who forsook his servant when he was sick,' 1 Sam. xxx. 13. but be as the good centurion, who kept his sick servant, and sought to Christ for a cure, Mat. viii. 6. If you have a beast that falls sick, you will not turn it off, but have it looked to, and pay for its cure; will you be kinder to your horses than to your servants? Thus should masters (the fathers of the family) carry themselves prudently and piously, that they may gain honour from their servants, and may give up their accounts to God with joy.

*Fifthly*, The natural father, the father of the flesh, Heb. xii. 9. 'Honour thy natural father.' This is so necessary a duty, that Philo the Jew placed the fifth commandment in the first table, as though we had not performed our whole duty to God, till we had paid this debt of honour to our natural parents. Children are the vineyard of the parent's planting; and honour done to the parent is some of the fruit of the vineyard.

Qu. *Wherein are children to shew their honour to their parents?*

Ans. 1. In a *reverential esteem of their persons*: they must "give them a civil veneration." Therefore when the apostle speaks of fathers of our bodies, he speaks also of 'giving them reverence,' Heb. xii. 9. This veneration or reverence must be shewn,

1. *Inwardly*, by fear mixed with love, Lev. xix. 3. 'Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father.' In the commandment the father is named first, here the mother is named first, (1.) Partly to put the honour upon her the mother, because, by reason of many weakneses incident to her sex, she is apt to be more slighted by children. And, (2.) Partly, because

the mother endures more for the child; therefore, here God gives the mother the priority, names her first, 'Ye shall fear every one his mother and his father.'

2. Reverence must be shewn to parents *outwardly, viz.* In word and gesture.

(1.) In word: and that either in speaking to parents, or speaking of them.

*First*, Reverence in speaking to parents: children must speak to parents respectfully, and in decent language, 1 Kings ii. 20. 'Ask on, my mother,' said king Solomon to his mother Bathsheba.

*Secondly*, Reverence in speaking of parents: children must speak of their parents honourably; they ought to speak well of them, if they deserve well, Prov. xxxi. 28. 'Her children rise up, and call her blessed.' And, in case a parent bewrays weakness and indiscretion, the child should make the best of it, and, by his wife apologies for his father, cover his father's nakedness.

(2.) In Gesture. Children are to shew their reverence to their parents by submissive behaviour, by uncovering the head; bending the knee. Joseph, though he was a great prince, and his father grown poor, yet he bowed to him, and behaved himself as humbly, as if his father had been the prince and he the poor man, Gen. xlviii. 46. And king Solomon, 'when his mother came to him, rose off his throne, and bowed himself to her,' 1 Kings ii. 19. Among the Lacedemonians, if a child had carried himself arrogantly or saucily to his father, it was lawful for the father to appoint whom he would to be his heir. O how many children are far from this, giving reverence to their parents! they despise their parents; they carry themselves with that pride and malapertness towards them, that they are a shame to religion, and bring their parents' gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, Deut. xvii. 16. 'Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother.' If all that set light by their parents are cursed, how many children in our age are under a curse! If such as are disrespectful to their parents live to have children, they will be thorns in their sides, and God will make them read their sins in their punishment.

II. The second way of shewing honour to parents, is in careful obedience, Col. iii. 20. 'Children, obey your parents in all things.' Our Lord Christ herein set a pattern to children, Luke ii. 52. 'He was subject to his parents.' He to whom angels were subject, yet was subject to his parents. This obedience to parents is shewn three ways;

(1.) In hearkening to their counsel, Prov. i. 8. 'Hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.' Parents are, as it were, in the room of God; if they would



teach you the fear of the Lord, you must listen to their words as oracles, and not be as the deaf adder, to stop your ears. Eli's sons hearkened not to the voice of their father, 1 Sam. ii. 25. but they were called 'sons of Belial,' ver. 12.—And children must hearken to the counsel of their parents, as in spiritual matters, so in other affairs which relate to this life; as in the choice of a calling, and in case of entering into marriage. Jacob would not dispose of himself in marriage (though he was forty years old), without the advice and consent of his parents, Gen. xxviii. 1, 2. Children are as it were the parent's proper goods and possession, and it is high injustice in a child to give away herself without the parents' leave.' If parents should indeed counsel a child to match with one that is irreligious or popish, I think the case is plain, and many of the learned are of opinion, that here the child may have a negative voice, and is not obliged to be ruled by the parent. Children are to 'marry in the Lord,' 1 Cor. viii. 30. Therefore not with persons irreligious, for that is not to marry in the Lord.

(2.) Obedience to parents is shewn in subscribing to their commands. A child should be the parent's echo: when the father speaks, the child should echo back obedience. The Rechabites were forbidden by their father to drink wine, and they did obey him, and were commended for it, Jer. xxxv. 6. And children must obey their parents in all things, Col. iii. 20. Things that are more against the grain, and which they have some reluctance to; yet they must obey their parents. Esau would obey his father, when he commanded him to fetch him venison, because it is probable he took pleasure in hunting; but refused to obey him in a matter of greater concernment, namely, in the choice of a wife. But though children must obey their parents 'in all things,' yet *refringitur ad licita et honesta*, it is with this limitation, "things just and honest." 'Obey in the Lord,' Eph. vi. 1. that in so far as the commands of parents agree with, and are consonant to God's commands. If they command against God, then they lose their right of being obeyed, but in this case we must unchild ourselves.

3. Honour is to be shewn to parents, in relieving their wants. Joseph cherished his father in his old age, Gen. xlvii. 12. It is but paying the just debt. Parents have brought up children when they were young, and children ought to nourish their parents when they are old. The young storks, by the instinct of nature, bring meat to the old storks, when by reason of age they are not able to fly. Pliny. *Lex pelargica*—The memory of Æneas was honoured, for carrying his aged father out of Troy when it was on fire. I have read of a daughter, whose father being condemned to be starved to death, she did in prison give him suck with her own breasts: which being

known to the governors, procured his freedom out of prison. To blame are such, shall I say children or monsters, who are ashamed of their parents when they are old, and fallen to decay when parents' tears and lean cheeks may plead pity, yet children have no compassion : when they ask for bread they give them a stone. When houses are shut up, we say the plague is there : when childrens' hearts are shut up against their parents, the plague is in those hearts. Our blessed Saviour took great care for his mother ; when he was on the cross he charged his disciple John to take her home to him as his mother ; and see that she wanted nothing, John xix. 26, 27. The reasons why children should honour their parents, are,

1. It is a solemn command of God, ' honour thy father, &c.' As God's word is the rule, so his will must be the reason of our obedience.

2. They deserve honour, in respect of that great love and affection which they bear to their children ; and that love is evidenced both by their care and cost, (1.) Their care in bringing up their children ; a sign their hearts are full of love, because their hearts are so full of care. Parents often take more care for their children than for themselves. They take care of them when they are tender, lest, like wall-fruit, they should be nipt in the bud. And as children grow older, so the care of parents grows greater : they are afraid of their children falling when young, and of worse faults when they are older. (2.) Their love is evidenced by their cost, 1 Cor. xii. 14. They lay up, and they lay out for their children ; they are not like the raven or ostrich, Job xxxix. 14. which are cruel to their young. Parents sometimes impoverish themselves to enrich their children : all this calls for honour from the children. Children can never parallel or equal parents' love ; parents are the instruments of life to their children, children cannot be so to their parents.

3. To honour parents, ' is well pleasing to the Lord,' Col. iii. 20. As it is joyful to the parents, so it is pleasing to the Lord. Children, is it not your duty to please God ? In honouring and obeying your parents, you please God, as well as when you repent and believe. And, that you may see how well it pleaseth God, he bestows a reward upon it, ' That thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' Jacob would not let the angel go, till he had blessed him ; nor God would not part with this commandment till he had blessed it. Here is the blessing, ' that thy days may be long upon the land, &c.' St Paul calls this the first commandment with promise, Eph. vi. 2. The second commandment hath a general promise of mercy ; but this is the first commandment that hath a particular promise made to it, ' That thy days may be long

in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' Long life is mentioned as a blessing, Ps. cxxviii. 6. 'Thou shalt see thy children's children.' It was a great favour of God to Moses, that though he was an hundred and twenty years old, he needed no spectacles; 'his eye was not dim, nor his natural strength abated,' Deut. xxiv. 7. God threatened it as a curse to Eli, that there should not be an old man in his family, 1 Sam. ii. 31. Since the flood, life is much abbreviated and cut short; some the womb is their tomb; others exchange the cradle for their grave; others die in the flower of their age; death serves its warrant every day upon one or other. Now, when death lies in ambush continually for us, if God satisfy us with long life, Psal. xci. 16. 'With long life will I satisfy him;' This is to be esteemed a blessing. It is a blessing that God gives a long time to repent and a long time to do service, and a long time to enjoy the comforts of relations; and upon whom is this blessing of long life entailed, but obedient children? Honour thy father, that thy days may be long. Nothing sooner shortens life than disobedience to parents. Absalom was a disobedient son, who sought to deprive his father of his life and crown; and he did not live out half his days; the mule he rode upon as being weary of such a burden, left him hanging in the oak betwixt heaven and earth, as not fit to tread upon the one, or enter into the other. Obedience to parents spins out thy life, — 'that thy days may be long.' Nor doth obedience to parents only lengthen life but sweeten it: therefore it follows, 'that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' To live long, and not to have a foot of land, is a misery; but obedience to parents settles land of inheritance upon the child. 'Hast thou but one blessing, O my father?' said Esau. Behold, God hath more blessings for an obedient child than one; not only shall he have a long life, but a fruitful land; and not only shall he have land, but land given in love, 'The land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' Thou shalt have thy land not only with God's leave, but with his love. All which are cogent arguments to make children honour and obey their parents.



EXOD. xx. 12. *Honour thy father—*

*Use 1.* If we are to honour our fathers on earth, then much more our Father in heaven, Mal. i. 6. 'If then I am a father, where is my honour?' A father is but the instrument of conveying life, but God is the original cause of our being, Pf. c. 3. 'For it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves.' Honour and adoration is a pearl which belongs only to the crown of heaven. And,

1. We shew honour to our heavenly Father, by obeying him. Thus Christ honoured his Father, John vi. 38. 'I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.' This he calls honouring of God, John viii. 29. 'I do always those things which please him.' v. 49. 'I honour my father.' The wise men did not only bow the knee to Christ, but presented him with gold and myrrh, Mat. ii. 2. So we must not only bow the knee, give God adoration, but bring him presents, give him golden obedience.

2. We shew honour to our heavenly Father, by appearing advocates in his cause, and standing up for his truth in an adulterous generation. That son honours his father, who stands up in his defence, and vindicates him when he is calumniated and reproached. Do they honour God who are ashamed of him? John xii. 42. 'Many believed on him, but durst not confess him.' They are bastard-sons, who are ashamed to own their heavenly Father; such as are born of God, are steed with courage for his truth; they are like the rock which no waves can break; like the adamant, which no sword can cut. Basil was a champion for truth in the time of the emperor Valens; and Athanasius, when the world was Arian, appeared for God.

3. We shew honour to our heavenly Father, by ascribing the honour of all we do to him, 1 Cor. xv. 10. 'I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was in me.' If a Christian hath any assistance in duty, any strength against corruption, he tears up a pillar and writes upon it, 'hitherto hath the Lord helped me.' As Joab, when he had fought against Rabbah, and had like to have taken it, sent for king David, that he might carry away the honour of the victory, 2 Sam. xii. 27. So, when a child of God hath any conquest over Satan, he gives all the honour to God. Hypocrites (whose lamp is fed with the oil of vain-glory) while they do any eminent service for God, seek themselves; and so their very serving of him is a dishonouring him.

4. We shew honour to our heavenly Father, by celebrating

his praise, Ps. lxxi. 8. 'Let my mouth be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour all the day,' Rev. v. 13. 'Blessing, honour, glory, and power be to him that sits upon the throne.' Blessing God is honouring of God : It lifts him up in the eyes of others ; it spreads his fame and renown in the world. In this manner the angels, the choristers of heaven, are now honouring God, they trumpet forth his praise : in prayer, we act like saints, in praise like angels.

5. We shew honour to our heavenly Father, by suffering dishonour, yea death for his sake. St. Paul did bear in his body the 'marks of the Lord Jesus,' Gal. vi. 17. As they were the marks of honour to him, so trophies of honour to the gospel. The honour which comes to God, is not by bringing that outward pomp and glory to him, which we do to kings, but it comes in another way, by the suffering of his people : they let the world see what a good God they serve, and how they love him, and will fight under his banner to the death. Thus you see how you are to honour your heavenly Father : God is 'worthy of honour,' Ps. civ. 1. 'Thou art clothed with honour and majesty.' What are all his attributes, but glorious beams shining from this sun ? He deserves more honour than men or angels can give him. 2. Sam. xx. 1. 'I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised.' God is worthy of honour. Often times we confer honour upon them that do not deserve it : many noble persons we give titles of honour to, who are sordid and vicious ; they do not deserve honour : but God is worthy of honour, Neh. ix. 5. 'Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessings and praise.' He is above all the acclamations and triumphs of the arch-angels. O then, let every true child of God honour his heavenly Father ! Though the wicked dishonour him by their flagitious lives, yet let not his own children dishonour him. Sins in you are worse than in others ; a fault in a stranger is not so much taken notice of, as a fault in a child : a spot in black cloth is not so much observed ; but a spot in scarlet, every one's eye is upon it : a sin in the wicked is not so much wondered at, it is a spot in black ; but a sin in a child of God, here is a spot in scarlet ; this is more visible, and brings an odium and dishonour upon the gospel. The sins of God's own children go nearer to his heart, Deut. xxii. 19. 'When the Lord saw it he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and daughters.' O forbear doing any thing that may reflect dishonour upon God. Will you disgrace your heavenly Father ? Let not God complain of the provocations of his sons and daughters ; let him not cry out, as Isa. i. 2. 'I have brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.' So much for the first ; if our earthly father be to be honoured, then much more our heavenly Father.

*Use II. Exhort. First Branch.* Doth God command, 'Honour thy father and thy mother?' Then let it exhort children to put this great duty in practice; be living commentaries upon this commandment. Honour and reverence your parents; not only obey their commands, but submit to their rebukes: you cannot honour your Father in heaven, unless you honour your earthly parents; to deny obedience to parents; entails God's judgment upon children, Prov. xxx. 17. 'The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagle shall eat it.' Eli's two disobedient sons were slain, 1 Sam. iv. 11. God made a law that the 'rebellious son should be stoned:' the same death the blasphemer had, Lev. xxiv. 14. Deut. xxi. 18. 'If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother; then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of the city, and all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die.' A father once complaining, "Never had a father a worse son than I have:" Yes," said the son, "my grandfather had:" a prodigy of impudence that can hardly be paralleled. Manlius, when he was grown old and poor, and had a son very rich, the old father desired some food of him, but the son denied him relief; yea, disclaimed him from being his father, and sent him away with reproachful language: the poor old father let tears fall (as witnesses of his grief.) But God, to revenge this disobedience, struck this unnatural son with madness, of which he could never be cured. Disobedient children stand in the place where all God's arrows fly.

*Second Branch.* Let parents so carry it, as they may gain honour from their children.

*Qu. How may parents so carry towards their children, that their children may willingly pay the debt of honour and reverence to their parents?*

*Ans.* If you would have your children honour you,

1. Be careful to bring them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, Eph. vi. 4. 'Bring them up in the admonition of the Lord.' You conveyed the plague of sin to them, therefore endeavour to get them healed and sanctified. Austin saith his mother Monica travailed more for his spiritual birth than his natural. Timothy's mother instructed him from a child, 2 Tim. iii. 15. She did not only give him her breast-milk, but 'The sincere milk of the word.' Season your children with good principles betimes, that they may, with Obadiah, 'fear the Lord from their youth,' 1 Kings xviii. 12. When parents instruct not their children, they seldom prove blessings. God oft punisheth the carelessness of parents with undutifulness in their children. It is not enough, that in baptism your child is de-



icated to God, but it must be educated for God. Children are young plants which you must be continually watering with good instruction, Prov. xxii. 6. 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and he will not depart from it when he is old.' 'The more your children fear God, the more they will honour you.'

2. If you would have your children honour, you keep up parental authority over your children; be kind, but do not cocker them; if you let them get too much ahead, they will condemn you, instead of honouring you. The rod of discipline must not be withheld, Prov. xxiii. 14. 'Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell.' A child indulged and humoured in wickedness, will be a thorn in the parent's eye. David cockered Adonijah, 1 Kings i. 6. 'His father had not displeased him at any time, in saying, Why hast thou done so?' And he afterwards was a grief of heart to his father, and was false to the crown, v. 7, 9. Keep up your authority, and you keep up your honour.

3. Provide for your children what is fitting, both in their minority, and when they come to maturity, 2 Cor. xii. 14. 'The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.' They are your own flesh; and, as the apostle saith, 'No man ever yet hated his own flesh,' Eph. v. 29. The parent's bountifulness will cause dutifulness in the child. If you pour water into the pump, the pump will send water again out freely; so, if parents pour in something of their estate to their children, children (if ingenuous) will pour out obedience again to their parents.

4. When your children are grown up, put them to some lawful calling, wherein they may serve their generation. And it is good to consult the natural genius and inclination of a child; forced callings do as ill, sometimes, as forced matches. To let a child be out of a calling, is to expose it to temptation. Melancthon, *Otium balneum diaboli*, a child out of a calling, is like fallow-ground; and what can you expect should grow up but weeds of disobedience?

5. Carry it lovingly to your children: in all your counsels and commands, let them read love. Love will command honour: and how can a parent but love the child, who is his living picture, nay part of himself; the child is the father in the second edition.

6. Carry it prudently towards your children. A great point of prudence, is, when a parent doth not provoke his children to wrath, Col. iii. 21. 'Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.'

Qu. *How many ways may a parent provoke his children to wrath?*

Ans. 1. By giving them opprobrious terms, 1 Sam. xx.

30. 'Thou son of the perverse, rebellious woman,' said Saul to his son Jonathan. Some parents use imprecations and curses to their children: this is to provoke them to wrath. Would you have God bless your children, and do you curse them?

2. Parents provoke children to wrath, when they strike their children without a cause; or when the correction exceeds the fault. This is rather to be a tyrant than a father: Saul cast a javelin at his son to smite him, 1 Sam. xx. 33. and his son was provoked to anger, ver. 34. 'So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger. *In filium pater obtinet not tyranicum, imperium, sed basilicum*, Davenant.

3. When parents deny their children *conveniences*: they will not let them have that which may cherish and govern nature. Some have thus provoked their children: they have flinted them, and kept them so short, that they have forced them upon indirect courses, and made them put forth their hands to iniquity.

4. When parents carry it unequally towards their children, shewing more kindness to one than to another; this sometimes breeds bad blood. Though a parent hath a greater love to one child, yet discretion should guide affection, that he should not shew more love to one than to another. Jacob shewed more love to Joseph than all his brethren, and what did it procure, but envy of his brethren, Gen. xxxvii. 3. 'Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children; and when his brethren saw that they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.'

5. When a parent doth any thing which is sordid and unworthy, that which cast's disgrace upon himself and his family; as to cozen, or take a false oath; this is to provoke the child to wrath. As the child should honour his father, so the father should not dishonour the child.

6. When parents lay such commands upon their children, as their children cannot perform without wronging their conscience. Saul commanded his son Jonathan to bring David to him, 1 Sam. xx. 3. 'Fetch him to me, for he shall surely die.' Jonathan could not do this with a good conscience; but was provoked to anger, ver. 34. 'Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger.' Now, the reason why parents should shew their prudence in not provoking their children to wrath, is set down, Col. iii. 21. 'Lest they be discouraged;' this word discouraged implies three things; (1.) Grief. The parents provoking the child, the child so takes it to heart, that it causeth immature death. (2.) Despondency: the parents' austerity dispirits the child, and makes it unfit for service; like members of the body stupified, which are unfit for work. (3.) Contumacy and refractoriness: the child being provoked by the cruel and unnatural carriage of the parent, grows desperate, and oft studies to irritate and vex

his parents ; which, though it be evil in the child, yet the parent is accessory to it, as being the occasion of it.

7. If you would have honour from your children, pray much for them. Not only lay up a portion for them, but lay up a stock of prayer for them. Monica prayed much for her son Austin ; and it was said, It was impossible a son of so many prayers and tears should perish. Pray that your children may be preserved from the contagion of the times : pray, that as your children bear your image in their faces, they may bear God's image in their hearts ; pray they may be instruments and vessels of glory. This may be one fruit of prayer, that the child may honour a praying parent.

8. Encourage that which you see good and commendable in your children. *Virtus laudata crescit.* Commending that which is good in your children, makes them more in love with virtuous actions ; and is like the watering of plants, which makes them grow more. Some parents discourage the good they see in their children, and so nip virtue in the bud, and help to damn their children's souls. They have their children's curses.

9. If you would have honour from your children, set them a good example ; it makes children despise their parents, when the parents live in a contradiction to their own precepts ; when they bid their children be sober, yet they themselves will be drunk : they bid their children fear God, yet are themselves loose in their lives. Oh ! if you would have your children honour you, teach them by an holy example. A father is a looking-glass which the child oft dresseth himself by ; let the glass be clear, and not spotted. Parents should observe a good decorum in their whole carriage, lest they give occasion to their children to say to them, as Plato's servant, " My master hath made a book against rash anger, but he himself is passionate ;" or, as a son once said to his father, " If I have done evil, I have learned it of you."

## OF THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. XX. 13. *Thou shalt not kill.*

IN this commandment, (1.) Is a sin forbidden, viz. murder ; ' Thou shalt not kill.' (2.) A duty implied, " To preserve our own life, and the life of others."

1. The sin forbidden, murder : ' Thou shalt not kill.' Where two things are to be understood. (1.) The not injuring another. (2.) Ourselves.



I. In this, 'Thou shalt not kill,' is meant the not injuring another. 1. We must not injure him in his name. 2. In his body. 3. In his soul.

(1.) We must not injure another in his name. A good name is a precious balsam ;' it is a great cruelty to murder a man in his name. We injure others in their name, when we calumniate and slander them. It was David's complaint, Ps. xxxv. 11. 'They laid to my charge things which I knew not.' The primitive Christians were traduced for incest, and killing their children, as Tertul. *Dicimur infanticidii, incestus rei*. This is to behead others in their good name ; there is an irreparable injury : no physician can heal the wounds of the tongue.

(2.) We must not injure another in his body. The life is the most precious thing : and God hath set this commandment as a fence about it to preserve it, 'Thou shalt not kill.' God made a statute which was never to this day repealed, Gen. ix. 6. 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' In the old law, had a man killed another unawares, he might take sanctuary : but if he had killed him willingly, tho' he did flee to the sanctuary, the holiness of the place was not to defend him, Exod. xxi. 14. 'If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile ; thou shalt take him from my altar, that he may die.' Now in this commandment, 'Thou shalt do no murder,' all those sins are forbidden which lead to it, and are the occasions of it : as,

1. *Unadvised anger*. Anger boils up the blood in the veins, and oft produceth murder, Gen. xlix. 6. 'In their anger they slew a man.'

2. *Envy*. Satan envied our first parents the robe of innocence, and the glory of paradise ; therefore never left till he had procured their death. Joseph's brethren envied him, because his father loved him, and gave him a 'coat of many colours : ' 'therefore take counsel to slay him,' Gen. xxxvii. 20. Envy and murder are near a kin, therefore the apostle puts them together, Gal. v. 21. 'Envyings, murders.' Envy is a sin breaks both the tables at once : it begins in discontent against God, and ends in injury against man, as we see in Cain, Gen. iv. 6, 8. Envious Cain was first discontented with God, there he broke the first table ; and then he fell out with his brother and slew him, there he broke the second table. Anger is sometimes 'soon over,' like fire kindled in straw, which is quickly out ; but envy is a radicated thing, and will not quench his thirst without blood, Prov. xxviii. 4. 'Who is able to stand before envy ?'

3. *Hatred*. The Pharisees hated Christ, because he excelled them in gifts, and had more honour among the people than they ; therefore they never left till they had nailed him to the

cross, and taken away his life. Hatred is a vermin lives upon blood, Ezek. xxxv. 5. 'Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel.' Haman hated Mordecai, because he did not bow to him; and he presently sought revenge, he got a bloody warrant sealed for the destruction of the whole race and seed of the Jews, Esther iii. 9. Hatred is ever cruel. All these sins are forbidden in this commandment, which lead the van, and are oft the occasions of this sin of murder.

*Qu. How many ways is murder committed?*

*Ans.* We may be said to murder another, twelve ways, (1.) With the hand; as Joab killed Abner and Amasa, 2 Sam. xx. 10. 'He smote him in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels.' (2.) Murder is committed with the mind. Malice is mental murder, 1 John iii. 15. 'Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer.' To malign another, and wish evil against him in the heart, is a murdering him. (3.) Murder is committed with the tongue, by speaking to the prejudice of another, and causing him to be put to death. Thus the Jews killed the Lord of life, when they inveighed against him, and accused him falsely to Pilate, John xvii. 30. (4.) Murder is committed with the pen. So David killed Uriah in writing to Joab 'to set Uriah in the forefront of the battle,' 2 Sam. xi. 15. Tho' the Ammonite's sword cut off Uriah, yet David's pen was the cause of his death; therefore the Lord tells David by the prophet Nathan, 2 Sam. xii. 9. 'Thou hast killed Uriah.' (5.) Murder is committed by plotting another's death. Thus Jezebel, tho' she did not lay hands herself upon Naboth; yet because she contrived his death, and caused two false witnesses to swear against him, and bring him within the compass of treason, she was a murderer, 1 Kings xxi. 10. (6.) Murder is committed by insinuating poison into potions. Thus the wife of Commodus the emperor killed her husband, by poisoning the wine which he drank. So, many kill the children they go with, by taking such medicines, or strong purges, as proves the death of the child. (7.) By witchcraft and sorcery; a thing forbidden under the law, Deut. xviii. 10. 'There shall not be found among you an enchanter, or a witch, or a consulter with familiar spirits.' (8.) By having an intention to kill another; as Herod would, under a pretence of worshipping Christ, have killed him, Matth. ii. 8, 13. So Saul, when he made David go as captain against the Philistines, designing thereby that the Philistines should have killed him, 1 Sam. xviii. 17. 'Saul said, Let not my hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.' Here was intentional murder, and it was in God's account, as bad as actual murder. (9.) By consenting to another's death; so Saul to the death of Stephen, Acts xxii. 20. 'I also was

standing by, and consenting to his death.' He that gives consent is accessary to the murder. (10.) By not hindering the death of another when in our power. Pilate knew Christ was innocent, 'I find no fault in him;' but he did not hinder his death; therefore he was guilty. It was not washing his hands in water, could wash away the guilt of Christ's blood. (11.) By unmercifulness. 1. By taking away that which is necessary for the sustentation of life: as to take away those tools or utensils whereby a man gets his living, Deut. xxiv. 6. 'No man shall take away the upper or the nether millstone to pledge, for he takes a man's life.' 2. By not helping him when he is ready to perish. You may be the death of another, as well by not relieving him, as by offering him violence. *Si non paveris, occidisti*, Amb. If thou dost not feed him that is starving, thou killest him.—And then, how many are guilty of the breach of this commandment. (12.) By not executing the law upon capital offenders. A felon having committed six murders, the judge may be said to be guilty of five of them, because he did not execute the felon for his first offence.

The next thing I shall speak to, is, to shew the aggravations of this sin of murder: As;

1. To shed the blood of another *causeless*; as to kill another in an humour or frolic. A bee will not sting, unless provoked, but many when they are not provoked, will take away the life of another. This makes the sin of blood more bloody. The less provocation to a sin, the greater the sin.

2. To shed the blood of another contrary to *promise*. Thus, after the princes of Israel had sworn to the Gibeonites, that they should live, Josh. ix. 17. Saul slew them, 2 Sam. xxi. 1. Here were two sins twisted together, breach of oath, and murder.

3. To take away the life of any *public person*, enhanceth the murder, and makes it greater; as, (1.) To kill a judge upon the bench, because he represents the king's person. (2.) To murder a person whose office is sacred, and comes on the King of heaven's embassy: the murder of him may be the murdering of many. Herod added this sin above all, that he shut up John Baptist in prison, Luke iii. 20. then much more to behead John in prison. (3.) To stain one's hands with royal blood. David's heart smote him, because he did cut off the lap of king Saul's garment, 1 Sam. xxiv. 5. How would David's heart have smitten him, if he had cut off Saul's head?

4. To shed the blood of a *near relation*, aggravates the murder, and dyes it of a deeper crimson. For a son to kill his father, is horrid. Parricides are monsters in nature. *Qui occidit patrem, plurima committit peccato in uno*, Cicero. He who takes away his father's life, committeth many sins in one; he



is not only guilty of murder, but of disobedience, ingratitude, Ostracism, and diabolical cruelty, Exod. xxi. 15. 'He who striketh his father or mother, shall surely be put to death.' Then how many death's is he worthy of, that destroys his father or mother? Such a monster was Nero, who caused his mother Agrippina to be slain.

5. To shed the blood of any *righteous person*, aggravates the sin. (1.) Hereby justice is perverted. Such a person, being innocent, is unworthy of death. (2.) A saint, being a public blessing, he lies in the breach to turn away wrath: so that to destroy him, is to go to pull down the pillars of a nation. (3.) He is precious to God, Isa. xv. 43, 44. He is a member of Christ's body; therefore what injury is offered to him is done to God himself, Acts ix. 4.

*Caution I.* Though this commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' forbids private persons to shed the blood of another (unless in their own defence), yet such as are in office must punish public offenders, yea, with death, else they sin. To kill an offender, is not murder, but justice. A private person sins, if he draws the sword; a public person sins, if he puts up the sword. A magistrate ought not to let the sword of justice rust in the scabbard. As the magistrate should not let the sword be too sharp by severity, so neither should the edge of it be blunted by too much lenity.

*Caution II.* Neither doth this commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' prohibit a just war. When men's sins grow ripe, and long plenty hath bred surfeit, then God saith, 'Sword, go through the land,' Ezek. xiv. 17. God did abet the war between the tribes of Israel and Benjamin; when the iniquity of the Amorites was full, then God sent Israel to commence a war against them, Judges xi. 21.

*Use I. Lamentation,* That this land is so defiled with blood, Numb. xxxv. 33. How common is this sin in this hectoring age! England's sins are written in letters of blood. Some make no more of killing men than sheep, Jer. ii. 34. 'In thy skirts is found the blood of the poor innocents.' Junius reads it, *in alis*; and so in Hebrew, 'in thy wings' is found the blood of innocents. It alludes to the birds of prey, which stain their wings with the blood of other birds. May not the Lord justly take up a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because 'blood toucheth blood?' Hos. iv. 2. There is a concatenation, a plurality of murders, And that which may increase our lamentation, is, that not only man's blood is shed among us, but Christ's blood. Such as are profane flagitious sinners, are said to 'crucify the Son of God afresh,' Heb. vi. 6. (1.) They swear by his blood, and so do, as it were, make his wounds bleed afresh. (2.) Crucify Christ in his members, Acts ix. 5. 'Why

persecutest thou me?' The foot being trodden on, the head crieth out. (3.) If it lay in their power, were Christ alive on earth, they would nail him again to the cross: thus men crucify Christ afresh; and, if man's blood doth so cry, how loud will Christ's blood cry against sinners?

*Use II.* Beware of having your hands imbrued in the blood of others.

*Obj.* But such a man hath wronged me by defamation, or otherways; and if I spill his blood, I do but revenge my own quarrel.

*Ans.* If he hath done you wrong, the law is open; but take heed of shedding blood. What, because he hath wronged you, will you therefore wrong God? Is it not a wrong to God, to take his work out of his hand? He hath said, 'Vengeance is mine, and I will repay,' Rom. xii. 19. But you will take upon you to revenge yourself: you will be both plaintiff, judge, and executioner, yourself. This is an high wrong done to God, and he will not hold you guiltless. Now, to deter all from having their hands defiled with blood, consider what a sin murder is.

1. A God-affronting sin: it is a breach of his commandment, trampling upon God's royal edict: It is a wrong offered to God's image, Gen. ix. 6. 'In the image of God made he man.' It is a tearing God's picture, and breaking in pieces the King of heaven's broad-seal. Man is the temple of God, 1 Cor. vi. 19. 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?' So that the man-slayer destroys God's temple: and will God endure to be thus confronted by proud dust?

2. It is a crying sin. *Clamitat in cælum vox sanguinis*—There are three sins in scripture said to cry. (1.) Oppression, Psal. xii. 5. (2.) Sodomy, Gen. xviii. 23. (3.) Blood-shed. This cries so loud, that it drowns all the other cries, Gen. iv. 10. 'The voice of thy brother's blood cries unto me from the ground.' Abel's blood had as many tongues as drops to cry aloud for vengeance. This sin of blood lay heavy on David's conscience: Though he had sinned by adultery, yet what he cried out of most, was, this crimson sin of blood, Psal. li. 14. 'Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God.' Though the Lord visits for every sin, yet he will in a special manner 'make inquisition for blood,' Psal. ix. 12. If a beast did kill a man, the beast was to be stoned, and 'his flesh must not be eaten,' Exod. xxi. 28. If God would have a beast stoned that killed a man, who had not the use of reason to restrain him, then much more will he be incensed against those, who go both against reason and conscience in spoiling the life of a man.

3. Murder is a diabolical sin: It makes a man the devil's first born: he was a murderer from the beginning, John viii. 44.

By saying to our first parents, 'Ye shall not die,' he brought in death to the world.

4. It is a cursed sin. If there be a curse {for him that smites his neighbour secretly, Deut. xxvii. 23. then he is doubly cursed that kills him. The first man that was born was a murderer, Gen. iv. 11. 'And now art thou cursed from the earth.' He was an excommunicated person, banished from the place of God's public worship. God set a mark upon bloody Cain, Gen. iv. 15. Some thought it was horror of mind, which (above all sins) doth accompany the sin of blood. Others think this mark was a continual shaking and trembling in his flesh, which was a mark of infamy God set upon him. He carried a curse along with him.

5. It is a wrath-procuring sin, 2 Kings xxiv. 4.

(1.) It procures Temporal judgments. Phocas, to get the empire, put to death all the sons of Mauricius the emperor, and then slew him: but this Phocas was pursued by his son-in-law Priscus, who cut off his ears and feet, and then killed him. Charles IX. who caused the massacre of so many Christians at Paris, blood issued out at several parts of his body, of which he died. Albonia killed a man, and then made a cup of his skull to drink in; afterwards his own wife caused him to be murdered in his bed. Vengeance, as a blood-hound, pursues the murderer; 'bloody men shall not live out half their days.' Psal. lv. 23.

(2.) It brings eternal judgments. It binds men over to hell. The papists make nothing of massacres; theirs is a bloody religion: they dispense with men for murder, so it be to propagate the catholic cause. If a cardinal put his red hat upon the head of a murderer going to execution, he is saved from death. But let all impenitent murderers read their doom, Rev. xxi. 8. 'Murderers shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone,' this 'is the second death:' we read of 'fire mingled with blood,' Rev. viii. 7. Such as have their hands full of blood must undergo the wrath of God. Here is fire mingled with blood, and this fire is inextinguishable, Mark ix. 44. Time will not finish it, tears will not quench it.

EXOD. xx. 13. *Thou shalt not kill.*

(3.) WE must not injure another's soul. This is the greatest murder of all, because there is more of God's image in the soul than in the body. The soul, though it cannot be annihilated, is said to be murdered, because it misseth of happi-



ness, and is for ever in torment. Now, how many are soul-murderers?

1. Such as corrupt others by bad example. The world is led by example; especially the examples of great ones are very pernicious—We are apt to do as we see others before us, especially above us. Such as are placed in high power, are like the pillar of cloud; when that went, Israel went: when great ones move in their sphere, others will follow them, though it be to hell. Evil magistrates, like the tail of the dragon, draw the ‘third part of the stars after them.’

2. Such as entice others to sin. The harlot, by curling her hair, rolling her eyes, laying open her breasts, doth what in her lies to be both a tempter and a murderer: such an one was Messalina, wife to Claudius the emperor, Prov. vii. 7, 10. ‘I discerned a young man, and there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot; so she caught him and kissed him.’ Better are the reproaches of a friend, than the kisses of an harlot.

3. Ministers are murderers, who either starve, or poison, or infect souls.

(1.) That starve souls, 1 Pet. i. v. ‘Feed the flock of God which is among you.’ These feed themselves, and starve the flock; either through non-residing, they do not preach, or through insufficiency they cannot. There are many in the ministry (a shame to speak it) so ignorant, that they had need to be taught the ‘first principles of the oracles of God,’ Heb. v. 12. Was not he fit to be a preacher in Israel (think ye) who being asked something concerning the decalogue, answered he never saw any such book?

(2.) That poison souls. Such are heterodox ministers, who poison people with error: the basilisk poisons herbs and flowers, by breathing on them: the breath of heretical ministers, like the basilisk’s breath, poisons souls. The Socinian, that would rob Christ of his Godhead, the Arminian, that by advancing the power of the will, would take off the crown from the head of free-grace; the Antinomian, who denies the use of the moral law to a believer, as if it were antiquated and out of date; these poison men’s souls. Error is as damnable as vice, 1 Pet. ii. 1. ‘There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them.’

(3.) That infect souls, viz. by their scandalous lives, Exod. xix. 22. ‘Let the priests which come near to the Lord, sanctify themselves.’ Ministers, who by their places are nearer to God, should be holier than others. The elements, the higher they are, the purer the air is purer than the water; the fire is purer than the air. The higher men are by office, the holier they should be; John Baptist was a shining lamp. But there

are many who infect their people with their bad life ; they preach one thing, and live another.

*Qui curios simulant et bacchanalia vivant*

They, like Eli's sons, are in white linen, but they have scarlet sins. Some say, that Prester John, the lord of Africa, caused to be carried before him a golden cup full of dirt : a fit emblem of such ministers as have a golden office, but are dirty and polluted in their lives. They are murderers, and the blood of souls will cry against them at the last day.

(4.) Such as destroy others, by getting them into bad company, and so making them proselytes to the devil. *Vitia in proximum quemque transfiliunt*, Sen. A man cannot live in the Ethiopian climate but he will be discoloured with the sun, nor he cannot be in bad company, but he will partake of their evil. One drunkard makes another ; as the prophet speaks in another sense, Jer. xxxv. 5. ' I set before them pots full of wine and cups, and said unto them, drink ye wine ; ' so the wicked set pots of wine before others, and make them drink till reason be stupified, and lust inflamed. These are guilty of the breach of this commandment, they are murderers of souls. How sad will it be with these, who have not only their own sins, but the blood of others, to answer for ? So much for the first thing forbidden in the commandment, the injuring of others.

II. The second thing forbidden in it is, the injuring one's self. ' Thou shalt not kill : ' thou shalt not do hurt to thyself.

(1.) Thou shalt not hurt thy own body. One may be guilty of self-murder, either 1. indirectly and occasionally. Or, 2. Directly and absolutely.

1. Indirectly and occasionally ; as,

*First*, When a man thrusts himself into danger which he might prevent : as if a company of archers were shooting, and one should go and stand in the place where the arrows fly ; if the arrow did kill him, he is accessory to his own death. In the law, God would have the leper shut up, to keep others from being infected, Lev. xiii. 4. Now, if any would be so presumptuous as to go in to the leper, and get the plague of leprosy, he might thank himself, he occasioned his own death.

*Secondly*, A person may be in some sense guilty of his own death, by neglecting the use of means. If sick, and use no physic ; if he hath received a wound and will not apply balsam, he hastens his own death. God appointed Hezekiah to lay a ' lump of figs to the boil, Isa. xxxviii. 21. If he had not used the lump of figs, he had been the cause of his own death.

*Thirdly*, By immoderate grief, 2 Cor. vii. 10. ' the sorrow of the world worketh death ; ' when God takes away a dear relation, and one is swallowed up with sorrow. How many weep

themselves into their graves! queen Mary grieved so excessively for the loss of Calais, that it broke her heart.

*Fourthly*, By intemperance, excess in diet. Surfeiting shortens life: *plures periere crapula, quam gladio*; many dig their grave with their teeth. Too much oil chokes the lamp: the cup kills more than the cannon. Excessive drinking causeth untimely death.

2. One may be guilty of self-murder, directly and absolutely.

1. By envy. Envy is *tristitia de bonis alienis*, a secret repining at the welfare of another.

*Invidus alterius rebus macrescit opimis.*

An envious man is more sorry at another's prosperity than at another's adversity; he never laughs, but when another weeps. Envy is a self-murder, a fretting canker. Cyprian calls it *vulnus occultum*, a secret wound; it hurts a man's self most. Envy corrodes the heart, dries up the blood, rots the bones, Prov. xiv. 30. 'Envy is the rottenness of the bones.' It is to the body, as the moth to the cloth, it eats it, and makes its beauty consume: envy drinks its own venom. The viper, which leaped on Paul's hand, thought to have hurt Paul, but fell herself into the fire, Acts xviii. 3. So, while the envious man thinks to hurt another, he destroys himself.

(2.) By laying violent hands on himself, and thus he is *felo de se*; as Saul fell upon his own sword and killed himself.

And because I see so many in the bills of mortality, who make away themselves, let me a little expatiate. It is the most unnatural and barbarous kind of murder for a man to butcher himself and imbrue his hands in his own blood. A man's self is most dear to him, therefore this sin of self-murder breaks both the law of God, and the bonds of nature. The Lord hath placed the soul in the body, as in a prison; now it is a great sin to break prison, till God by death open the door. Self-murderers are worse than the brute creatures: they will tear and gore one another, but no beast will go to destroy itself. Self-murder is occasioned usually from discontent: discontent is joined with a sullen melancholy. The bird that beats herself in the cage, and is ready to kill herself, is the true emblem of a discontented spirit.

And this discontent ariseth, (1.) From pride. A man that is swelled with an high opinion of himself, thinks he deserves better than others; and if any cross befall him, he is discontented, and now in a sudden passion will make away himself. Ahithophel had high thoughts of himself, his words were esteemed oracles; and to have his wife counsel rejected, he was not able to bear it, 2 Sam. xvii. 23. 'He put his house in order, and hanged himself.' (2.) From Poverty. Poverty is a sore temptation, Prov. xxx. 19. 'Give me not poverty.' Many by their sin



have brought themselves to poverty; and when a great estate is boiled away to nothing, then they are discontented, and think better to die quickly, than languish in misery: hereupon the devil helps them to dispatch themselves. (3.) From covetousness. Avarice is a dry drunkenness, an horse-leech that is never satisfied. The covetous man is like Behemoth, Job xl. 23. 'Behold, he drinketh up rivers, and yet his thirst is not allayed.' The covetous miser hoards up corn; and if he hears the price of corn begins to fall, then he is troubled, and there is no cure for his discontent but an halter. (4.) From horror of mind. A man hath sinned a great sin, he hath swallowed down some pills of temptation the devil hath given him, and these pills begin to work in his conscience; and the horror is so great, that he chooseth strangling. Judas having betrayed innocent blood, he was in that agony, that he hanged himself to quiet his conscience; as if one should, to avoid the stinging of a gnat, endure the biting of a serpent. Thus self-murder is an high breach of this commandment, it is an execrable sin. I can see no ground of hope for such as make away themselves; for they die in the very act of sin, and cannot have time to repent.

(2.) Here is forbidden hurting one's own soul, 'thou shalt not kill.' Many who are free from other murders, yet are guilty here; they go about to murder their own souls; they are wilfully set to damn themselves, and throw themselves into hell.

*Qu. Who are they that go about desperately to murder their own souls?*

*Ans.* 1. Such wilfully go about to murder their souls, who have no sense of God, or the other world; they are past feeling, Eph. iv. 19. Tell them of God's holiness and justice, they are not at all affected, Zech. vii. 12. 'They made their hearts like an adamant.' The adamant saith Pliny is insuperable, the hammer cannot conquer it. Sinners have adamantine hearts. The altar of stone, when the prophet spake to it, 'rent asunder,' 1 Kings xiii. 2. But sinners' hearts are so hardened in sin, that nothing will work upon them; neither ordinances nor judgments: they do not believe a Deity, they laugh at hell; these go about to murder their own souls, they are throwing themselves as fast as they can into hell.

2. Such as are set wilfully to murder their own souls, are they who are resolved upon their lusts, let what will come of it. The soul may cry out, I am killing, I am murdering, Eph. iv. 19. 'They have given themselves over to work all uncleanness with greediness.' Let ministers speak to them about their sins, let conscience speak, let affliction speak, yet they will have their lusts, though they go to hell for them. Are not these resolved to murder their souls? As Agrippina, mother to Nero,

said, *Occidat modo imperet*, let my son kill me, so he may reign; so many say in their hearts, let our sins damn us, so they may but please us. Herod will have his incestuous lust, though it cost him his soul: men will, for a drop of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath. Are not these about to massacre and damn their souls?

3. They murder their souls, who avoid all means of saving their souls. They will go to plays, to drunken meetings: but will not set their foot within God's house, or come near the sound of the gospel-trumpet: as if one that is diseased should shun the bath, for fear of being healed; these do wilfully damn their souls, and are as great murderers of themselves; as he, who having means of cure offered him, chooseth death rather than physic.

4. They do voluntarily murder their souls, who suck in false prejudices against religion; as if religion were so strict and severe: they that espouse holiness, must live a melancholy life, like Hermits and Anehorites, and drown all their joy in tears. This is a slander which the devil hath cast upon religion: for there is no true joy but in believing, Rom. xv. 13. No honey so sweet as that which drops from a promise. Some men have foolishly taken up a prejudice against religion; they are resolved rather never to go to heaven, - than to go thither through the strait gate. I may say of prejudice, as Paul to Elymas, Acts xiii. 10. 'O prejudice, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness,' How many souls hast thou damned?

5. They are wilfully set to murder their own souls, who will neither be good themselves, nor suffer others to be so, Mat. xxii. 23. 'Ye neither go into the kingdom of heaven yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in.' Such are those that persecute others for their religion. Drunken meetings shall escape punishments: but, if men meet to serve God, then let all severity be used. These are resolved to shipwreck others, though they themselves are cast away in the storm. Oh! take heed of this, of murdering your own souls; no creature but man doth willingly kill itself. So I have done with the first, the sin forbidden in this commandment, 'thou shalt not kill.'



EXOD. xx. 13. *Thou shalt not kill.*

II. THE second duty implied is, that we should do *all the good we can to ourselves and others.*

1. In reference to others. We should endeavour to preserve the lives and souls of others. 2. In reference to ourselves. To preserve our own life and soul. [1.] In reference to others.

(1.) To preserve the life of others. Comfort them in their sorrows, relieve them in their wants; be as the good Samaritan, pour wine and oil into their wounds, Job' xxix. 16. 'I was a father to the poor.—13. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me.' This is a great means of preserving the life of another, by relieving him when he is ready to perish. Pompey, when there was a great dearth in Rome, provided corn for their relief; and when the mariners were backward to sail thither in a tempest, said he, "It is not necessary that we should live, but it is necessary that Rome be relieved." Grace makes the heart tender, it causeth sympathy and charity: as it melts the heart in contrition towards God, so in compassion towards others, Ps. cxii. 9. 'He hath dispersed, and given to the poor.' This the commandment implies, that we should be so far from ruining others, that we should do all we can to preserve the lives of others. When we see the picture of death drawn in their faces, administer to their necessities; be temporal saviours to them; draw them out of the waters of affliction with a silver cord of charity. That I may persuade you to this, let me lay before you arguments;

*First*, Works of charity evidence grace.

1. *Faith*, James ii. 18. 'I will shew thee my faith by my works.' Works are faith's letters of credence to shew. We judge of the health of the body by the pulse, where the blood stirs and operates: Christian, judge of the health of thy faith by the pulse of charity: the word of God is the rule of faith, and good works are the witnesses of faith.

*Love*. Love loves mercy: it is a noble bountiful grace. Mary loved Christ, and how liberal was her love! she bestowed on Christ her tears, kisses, costly ointments. Love, like a full vessel, will have vent; it vents itself in acts of liberality.

*Secondly*, To communicate to the necessities of others, is not arbitrary (is it not left to our choice whether we will or no) but it is a duty incumbent, 1 Tim. vi. 16. 'Charge them that are rich in this world that they do good,—that they be rich in good works.' This is not only a counsel, but a charge. If God should lay a charge upon the inanimate creatures, they would obey; if he would charge the rocks, they would send forth water, if he should charge the clouds, they would melt into showers: if he should charge the stones, they would become bread.—And shall we be harder than the stones, not to obey God, when he chargeth us to 'be rich in good works?'

*Thirdly*, God supplies our wants, and shall not we supply the wants of others? "We could not live without mercy." God makes every creature helpful to us: the sun doth enrich us with its golden beams: the earth yields us its increase, veins of gold, crops of corn, store of flowers, God opens the treasury of his



mercy ; he feeds us every day out of the alms-basket of his providence : ‘ thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing,’ Ps. cxlv. 16. Now, doth God supply our wants, and shall not we minister to the wants of others? shall we be only as a sponge to suck in mercy, and not as breasts to milk it out to others?

*Fourthly*, Herein we resemble God, to be doing good to others. It is our excellency to be like God : “ godliness is Godlikeness.” And wherein are we more like him, than in acts of bounty and munificence? Ps. cxix. 68. ‘ Thou art good, and doest good.’ ‘ Thou art good,’ there is God’s essential goodness ; and ‘ doest good,’ there is his communicative goodness. The more helpful we are to others, the more like we are to God : we cannot be like to God in omniscience, or in working miracles ; but we may be like him in doing works of mercy.

*Fifthly*, God remembers all our deeds of charity, and takes them kindly at our hands, Heb. vi. 10. ‘ God is not unrighteous to forget your labour of love which you have shewed towards his name, in that you have ministered unto the saints.’ The chief butler may forget Joseph’s kindness, but the Lord will not forget any kindness we shew to his people, Matth. xxv. 35. ‘ I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat ; thirsty, and ye gave me drink.’ Christ takes the kindness done to his saints, as done to himself ; God, that hath a bottle for your tears, hath a book to write down your alms, Mal. iii. 16. ‘ A book of remembrance was written before him.’ Tamerlane had a register to write down all the names and good services of his soldiers ; so, God hath a book of remembrance to write down all your charitable works ; and at the day of judgment there shall be an open and honourable mention made of them in presence of the angels.

*Sixthly*, Hard heartedness to them in misery reproacheth the gospel. When men’s hearts are like pieces of rocks, or as ‘ the scales of the Leviathan, shut up as with a close seal,’ Job xli. 15. You may as well extract oil out of a flint stone, as the golden oil of charity out of their hearts. “ These unchristian themselves. Unmercifulness is the sin of the heathen,” Rom. i. 31. ‘ Without mercy.’ It eclipseth the glory of the gospel ; doth the gospel teach uncharitableness? Doth it not bid us draw ‘ out our soul to the hungry?’ Isa. l. 10. Tit. iii. 8. ‘ These things I will that ye affirm, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works.’ While you relieve not such as are in want, you walk antipodes to the gospel ; you cause it to be evil spoken of, and lay it open to the lash and censure of others.

*Seventhly*, There is nothing lost by relieving the necessitous.

The Shunamite woman was kind to the prophet, she welcomed him to her house, and she received kindness from him another way ; he restored her dead child to life, 2 Kings iv. 35. Such as are helpful to others, shall ' find mercy to help in time of need.' Such as pour out the golden oil of compassion to others, God will pour out the golden oil of salvation to them : for a ' cup of cold water,' they shall have ' rivers of pleasure.' Nay, God will make it up some way or other in this life, Prov. xi. 25. ' The liberal soul shall be made fat ;' as the loaves in breaking multiplied ; or, as the widow's oil increased in pouring out, 1 Kings xvii. 10. An estate may be imparted, yet not impaired.

*Eighthly,* To do good to others in necessity, keeps up the credit of religion. Works of mercy adorn the gospel, as the fruit adorns the tree : when ' our light so shines that others see our good works,' this glorifies God, crowns religion, silenceth the lips of gainsayers. Basil saith, nothing rendered the true religion more famous in the primitive times, and made more profelytes to it, than the bounty and charity of the Christians.

*Ninthly, and lastly,* The evil that doth accrue by not preserving the lives of others, and helping them in their necessities. God sends oft a secret moth into their estate, Prov. xi. 24. ' There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty,' Prov. xxi. 13. ' Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.' James ii. 13. ' He shall have judgment without mercy, that shewed no mercy.' Dives denied Lazarus a crumb of bread, and Dives was denied a drop of water, Matth. xxv. 41. ' Depart from me, ye cursed ; for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat.' Christ saith not ye took away my meat ; but ' ye gave me no meat ;' ye did not feed my members, therefore, ' depart from me.' By all this, be ready to distribute to the necessities of others. This is included in the commandment, ' thou shalt not kill.' Not only thou shalt not destroy his life, but thou shalt preserve it by giving to his necessities.

(2.) It is implied, that we should endeavour to preserve the souls of others ; counsel them about their souls, set life and death before them, help them to heaven. In the law, if one met his neighbour's ox or ass going astray, he must bring him again, Exod. xxxiii. 4. Much more, if we see our neighbour's soul going astray, we should use all means to bring him back to God by repentance.

[2.] In reference to ourselves. The commandment, ' Thou shalt not kill,' requires that we should preserve our own life and soul ; it is engraven upon every creature, that we should preserve our own natural life. We must be so far from self-murder, that we must do all we can to preserve our natural life ; we

must use all means of-diet, exercise and lawful recreation, which is like oil to preserve the lamp of life from going out. Some have been under temptation; Satan has suggested they are such sinners as do not deserve a bit of bread, and so they have been ready to starve themselves; this is contrary to the sixth commandment, 'thou shalt do no murder;' it is implied, we are to use all means for the preservation of our own life, 1 Tim. v. 23. 'Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake.' Timothy was not by drinking too much water to overcool his stomach, and weaken nature, but we must use means for self-preservation, 'drink a little wine,' &c.

*Secondly*, This commandment requires, that we should endeavour (as to preserve our own, life so especially) to preserve our own souls.

*Omnia perdas animam servare memento.*

It is engraven upon every creature, as with the point of a diamond, that it should look to its own preservation. If the life of the body must be preserved, then much more the life of the soul. If he who doth not provide for his own house is worse than an infidel, 1 Tim. v. 8. then much more he who doth not provide for his own soul. This is a main thing implied in the commandment, a special care for the preserving our souls: the soul is the jewel; the soul is a diamond set in a ring of clay: Christ puts the soul in balance with the world, and it outweighs, Mat. xvi. 26. The soul is a glass, in which some rays of divine glory shine; it hath in it some faint idea and resemblance of a Deity; it is a celestial spark lighted by the breath of God. The body was made of the dust, but the soul is of a more noble extract and original, Gen. ii. 7. 'God breathed into man a living soul.'

1. The soul is excellent in its nature. It is a spiritual being, 'it is a kind of angelical thing:' the mind sparkles with knowledge, the will is crowned with liberty, and all the affections are as stars shining in their orbs. The soul being spiritual, (1.) It is of quick operation. How quick are the motions of a spark! how swift the wing of a cherubim! so quick and agile is the motion of the soul! what is quicker than a thought? How many miles can the soul travel in an instant! (2.) The soul, being spiritual, moves upward, it contemplates God and glory, Ps. lxxiii. 25. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' The motion of the soul is upward; only sin hath put a wrong bias upon the soul, and made it move too much downward. (3.) The soul, being spiritual, hath a self-moving power; it can subsist and move when the body is dead, as the mariner can subsist when the ship is broken. (4.) The soul, being spiritual, is immortal, (Scaliger) *Aeternitatis gemma*, a bud of eternity.

2. As the soul is excellent in its nature, so in its capacities.



It is capable of grace, it is fit to be an associate and companion of angels : It is capable of communion with God, of being Christ's spouse, 2 Cor. xi. 12. ' That I might espouse your virgin souls to Christ.' It is capable of being crowned with glory for ever. O then, carrying such precious souls about you, created with the breath of God, redeemed with the blood of God ; what endeavours should you use for the saving of these souls ! let not the devil have your souls. Heliogabalus fed his lions with pheasant : the devil is called a roaring lion, feed him not with your souls. Besides the excellency of the soul, which may make you labour to get it saved, consider how sad it will be not to have the soul saved. It is such a loss as there is none like it ; because, in losing the soul you lose a great many things with it. A merchant in losing his ship, loseth many things with it ; he loseth money, jewels, spices, &c. so, he that loseth his soul, loseth Christ, the company of angels in heaven : it is an infinite loss, and it is an irreparable loss ; it can never be made up again. Two eyes but one soul, Chrysostom. O what care should be taken of the immortal soul ! I would request but this of you, that you would but take as much care for the saving of your souls, as you do for the getting of an estate : nay, I will say this, do but take as much care for the saving your souls, as the devil doth for destroying them. O how industrious is Satan to damn souls ? how doth he play the serpent in his subtil laying of snares to catch souls ! how doth he shoot fiery darts ! the devil is never idle ; the devil is a busy bishop in his diocese ; he ' walks up and down seeking whom he may devour,' 2 Pet. v. 8. Now, is not this a reasonable request, to take but as much care for the saving of your souls, as the devil doth for destroying of them ?

Qu. *How shall we do to get our souls saved ?*

Ans. By having them sanctified. Only the ' pure in heart shall see God.' Get your souls inlayed and enamelled with holiness, 1 Pet. i. 16. It is not enough that ' we cease to do evil,' which is all the evidence some have to shew) this is to lose heaven by short-shooting ; but we must be inwardly sanctified : not only the ' unclean spirit' must go out, but we must be filled with the ' Holy Ghost,' Eph. v. 18. This holiness must needs be, if you consider God is to dwell with you here, and you are to dwell with him hereafter.

*First*, God is to dwell with you here. God takes up the soul for his own lodging, Eph. iii. 17. ' That Christ may dwell in your hearts.' Therefore the soul must be consecrated. A king's palace must be kept clean, especially his presence-chamber. The body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. vi. 19. then the soul is the *sanctum sanctorum* : how holy ought that to be.

*Secondly*, You are to dwell with God. Heaven is an holy

place, 1 Pet. i. 4. 'An inheritance undefiled.' And how can you dwell with God till you are sanctified? We do not put wine into a musty vessel: God will not put the new wine of glory into a sinful heart. O then, as you love your souls, and would have them saved eternally, endeavour after holiness; by this means you will have an idoneity and fitness for the kingdom of heaven, and your souls will be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

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## OF THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 14. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

God is a pure, holy Spirit, and hath an infinite antipathy against all uncleanness. In this commandment he hath entered his caution against it, *non mæchaberis*, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' The sum of this commandment is, *The preservation of corporal purity*. We must take heed of running on the rock of uncleanness, and so making shipwreck of our chastity. In this commandment there is something tacitly implied, and something expressly forbidden.

1. Something tacitly implied, viz. That the ordinance of marriage should be observed.

2. Something expressly forbidden, viz. The infecting ourselves with bodily pollutions, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.'

(1.) Something implied, that *the ordinance of marriage should be observed*, 1 Cor. vii. 2. 'Let every man have his own wife, and every woman have her own husband.' Marriage is honourable and the bed undefiled, Heb. xiii. 4. God did institute marriage in paradise: he 'brought the woman to the man,' Gen. ii. 22. He did as it were give them in marriage. And Jesus Christ did honour marriage with his presence, John ii. 2. The first miracle he wrought was at a marriage, when he turned the 'water into wine.'—Marriage is a type and resemblance of the mystical union between Christ and his church, Eph. v. 32. Concerning marriage,

[1.] There are general duties. 1. The general duty of the husband is to rule, Eph. v. 23. 'The husband is the head of the wife.' The head is the seat of rule and government; but he must rule with discretion. He is head, therefore must not rule without reason. 2. The general duty on the wife's part is submission, Eph. iii. 22. 'Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.' It is observable, the Holy Ghost passed by Sarah's failings, he doth not mention her un-

belief; but he takes notice of that which was good in her, her reverence and obedience to her husband, 1 Pet. iii. 6. 'Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.'

[2.] *Special duties* belonging to marriage, are love and fidelity. 1. *Love*, Eph. v. 25. 'Love is the marriage of the affections.' There is, as it were, but one heart in two bodies: love lines the yoke and makes it easy: love perfumes the marriage-relation: without which it is not *conjugium* but *conjurgium*; it is like two poisons in one stomach, one is ever sick of the other. 2. *Fidelity*. In marriage there is mutual promise of living together faithfully according to God's holy ordinance. Among the Romans, on the day of marriage, the woman presented to her husband fire and water; fire refines metal, water cleanseth: hereby signifying, that she would live with her husband in chastity and sincerity. This is the first thing in the commandment implied, that the ordinance of marriage should be purely observed.

(2.) The thing forbidden in the commandment, *i. e.* infecting ourselves with bodily pollution and uncleanness. 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' The fountain of this sin is lust. Since the fall, holy love is degenerated to lust. Lust is the fever of the soul. There is a twofold adultery: 1. *Mental*, Mat. v. 28. 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' As a man may die of an inward bleeding, so he may be damned for the inward boilings of lust, if they be not mortified. 2. *Corporal adultery*; when sin hath conceived, and brought forth in the act. This is expressly forbidden under a *sub pœna*, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' This commandment is set as an hedge to keep out uncleanness; and they that break this hedge a serpent shall bite them. Job calls adultery an heinous crime, Job xxxi. 11. Every failing is not a crime; and every crime is not an heinous crime; but adultery is, *flagitium*, an heinous crime. The Lord calls it villainy, Jer. xxix. 33. 'They have committed villainy in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives.

Qu. *Wherein appears the heinousness of this sin of adultery?*

Ans. 1. In that adultery is the breach of the marriage-oath. When persons come together in a matrimonial way, they bind themselves by covenant each to other in the presence of God, to be true and faithful in the conjugal relation. Unchastity is a falsifying this solemn oath; and herein adultery is worse than fornication, because it is a breach of the conjugal bond.

2. The heinousness of adultery lies in this, That it is such an high dishonour done to God. God saith, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' The adulterer sets his will above God's



law, tramples upon God's command, affronts him to his face ; as if a subject should tear his prince's proclamation. The adulterer is highly injurious to all the persons in the Trinity. 1. To God the Father. Sinner, God hath given thee thy life, and thou dost waste the lamp of thy life, the flower of thy age in lewdness ; he hath bestowed on thee many mercies, health and estate, and thou spendest all on harlots. Did God give thee wages to serve the devil ? (2.) Injurious to God the Son, two ways. *First*, As he hath purchased thee with his blood, 1 Cor. vi. 20. 'Ye are bought with a price.' Now, he who is bought, is not his own ; it is a sin for him to go to another, without consent from Christ, who hath 'bought him with a price.' *Secondly*, By virtue of baptism thou art a Christian, and professest that Christ is thy head, and thou art a member of Christ ; therefore, what an injury is it to Christ, to take the members of Christ, and make them the 'members of an harlot,' 1 Cor. vi. 15. (3.) It is injurious to God the Holy Ghost ; for the body is his temple, 1 Cor. vi. 19. 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you ?' And what a sin is it to defile his temple !

3. The heinousness of adultery lies in this, That it is committed with mature deliberation. First, there is the contriving the sin in the mind, then consent in the will, and then the sin is put forth into act. To sin against the light of nature, and to sin deliberately, is like the dye to the wool, it gives sin a tincture, and dyes it of a crimson colour.

4. That which makes adultery so heinous, is, That it is a sin after remedy. God hath provided a remedy to prevent this sin, 1 Cor. vii. 2. 'To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife.' Therefore, after this remedy prescribed, to be guilty of fornication or adultery, is inexcusable ; it is like a rich thief, that steals when he has no need. This doth enhance and accent the sin, and make it heinous.

*Use I.* It condemns the church of Rome who allow the sin of fornication and adultery. They suffer not their priests to marry, but they may have their courtezans ; the worst kind of uncleanness. Incest with the nearest of kin, is dispensed with for money. It was once said of Rome,—*Urbs est jam tota lupanar*,—Rome was become a common stew. And no wonder, when the pope could, for a sum of money, give them a licence and patent to commit uncleanness : and, if the patent were not enough, he would give them a pardon. Many of the papists judge fornication venial. God condemns the very lusting, Matth. v. 28. If God condemns the thought, how dare they allow the fact of fornication ? You see what a cage of unclean birds the church of Rome is : they call themselves the Holy Catholic Church ;

but, how can they be holy, who are so steeped and par-boiled in fornication, incest, sodomy, and all manner of uncleanness?

*Use II.* It is matter of lamentation, to see his commandment so slighted and violated among us. Adultery is the reigning sin of the times, Hos. vii. 4. 'They are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker.' The time of k. Henry VIII. was called the golden age, but this may be called the unclean age, wherein whore-hunting is common, Ezek. xxiv. 13. 'In your filthiness is lewdness.' Luther tells of one who said, "If he might but satisfy his lust, and be carried from one whore-house to another, he would desire no other heaven; afterwards he breathed out his soul betwixt two notorious strumpets." This is to be the right seed of Adam, to love the forbidden fruit, to love to drink of stolen waters, Ezek. viii. 8, 9. 'Son of man, dig in the wall; and when I had digged, behold a door; and he said, Go in and behold the wicked abominations that they do here.' Could we, as the prophet, dig in the walls of many houses, what vile abominations should we see there! In some chambers we might see fornication; dig further, and see adultery; dig further, and we may see incest, &c. And may not the Lord go from his sanctuary? as, Ezek. viii. 9. 'Seest thou the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth, that I should go far off from my sanctuary?' God might remove his gospel, and then we might write I chabod on this nation, 'The glory is departed.' Let us mourn for what we cannot reform.

*Use III.* It exhorts us to keep ourselves from this sin of adultery. 'Let every man have his own wife,' saith Paul, 1 Cor. vii. 2. not his concubine, nor his courtesan. Now, that I may deter you from adultery, let me shew you the great evil of it.

*First,* It is a thievish sin. Adultery is the highest sort of theft: the adulterer steals from his neighbour that which is more than his goods and estate; he steals away his wife from him, 'who is flesh of his flesh.'

*Secondly,* Adultery debaseth a person, it makes him resemble the beasts; therefore the adulterer is described like an horse neighing, Jer. v. 8. 'Every one neigheth after his neighbour's wife.' Nay, this is worse than brutish; for some creatures, that are void of reason, yet by the instinct of nature, observe a kind of decorum of chastity. The turtle dove is a chaste creature, and keeps to its mate: the stork, whenever he flies, comes into no nest but his own. Naturalists write, if a stork, leaving his own mate, joineth with any other, all the rest of the storks fall upon him, and pull his feathers from him. Adultery is worse than brutish, it degrades a person of his honour.

*Thirdly,* Adultery doth pollute and be-filthy a person. The devil is called an unclean spirit, Luke xi. 24. The adulterer is the devil's first-born; he is unclean; he is a moving quar-

more; he is all over ulcerated with sin: his eyes sparkle with lust; his mouth foams out filth; his heart burns like mount Aetna, in unclean desires: he is so filthy, that if he die in this sin, all the flames of hell will never purge away his uncleanness. And, as for the adulterers, who can paint her black enough? The scripture calls her a deep ditch, Prov. xxiii. 27. She is a common shore: whereas a believer, his body is a living temple, and his soul is a little heaven, bespangled with the graces, as so many little stars. The body of an harlot is a walking dunghill, and her soul a lesser hell.

*Fourthly*, Adultery is destructive to the body, Prov. v. 11. 'And thou mourn at last, when thy flesh and thy body is consumed.' It brings into a consumption. Uncleanness turns the body into an hospital; it wastes the radical moisture, rots the skull, eats the beauty of the face. As the flame wastes the candle, so the fire of lust consumes the bones. The adulterer hastens his own death, Prov. vii. 23. 'Till a dart strike through his liver.' The Romans had their funerals at the gate of Venus' temple, to signify that lust brings death. Venus is lust.

*Fifthly*, Adultery is a purgatory to the purse: as it wastes the body, so the estate, Prov. vi. 26. 'By the means of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread.' Whores are the devil's horse-leeches, sponges that will soon suck in all one's money. The prodigal had soon spent his portion, when once he fell among harlots, Luke xv. 30. King Edward III. his concubine, when he lay a-dying, got all she could from him, and plucked the rings off his fingers, and so left him. He that lives in luxury, dies in beggary.

*Sixthly*, Adultery blotteth and eclipseth the name, Prov. vi. 33. 'Whoso committeth adultery with a woman, a wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.' Some, while they get wounds, get honour. The soldier's wounds are full of honour: the martyr's wounds for Christ are full of honour: these get honour while they get wounds: but the adulterer gets wounds in his name, but no honour. 'His reproach shall not be wiped away.' The wounds of the name no physician can heal. The adulterer, when he is dead, his shame lives. When his body rots under ground, his name rots above ground. His base-born children will be the living monuments of his shame.

*Seventhly*, This sin doth much eclipse the light of reason; it steals away the understanding; it stupifies the heart, Hos. iv. 11. 'Whoredom takes away the heart.' It eats out all heart for good. Solomon befotted himself with women, and they enticed him to idolatry.

*Eighthly*, This sin of adultery ushers in temporal judgments.



The Mosaical law made adultery death, Lev. xx. 10. 'The adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death,' and the usual death was stoning, Deut. xxii. 24. The Saxons commanded the persons taken in this sin to be burnt. The Romans caused their heads to be stricken off. This sin like a scorpion carries a sting in the tail of it. The adultery of Paris and Helena, a beautiful strumpet, ended in the ruin of Troy, and was the death both of Paris and Helena. 'Jealousy is the rage of a man;' and the adulterer is often killed in the act of his sin. Adultery cost Otho the Emperor, and Pope Sixtus IV. their lives.

*Lætus venire Venus tristis abire solet.*

I have read of two citizens in London, 1583, who, defiling themselves with adultery on the Lord's day, were immediately struck dead with a fire from heaven. If all that were now guilty of this sin should be punished in this manner, it would rain fire again, as on Sodom.

*Ninthly*, Adultery, (without repentance) damns the soul, 1 Cor. vi. 9. 'Neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, shall enter into the kingdom of God.' The fire of lust brings to the fire of hell, Heb. xiii. 4. 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.' Though men may neglect to judge them, yet God will judge them.—But will not God judge all other sinners? Yes. Why then doth the apostle say, 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge?' The meaning is, (1.) He will judge them assuredly; they shall not escape the hand of justice. (2.) He will punish them severely, 2 Pet ii. 10. 'The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished, but chiefly them that walk in the lust of uncleanness.' The harlot's breast keeps from Abraham's bosom, *Momentaneum est quod deleat, æternum quod cruciat*, Who would, for a cup of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath? Prov. ix. 18. 'Her guests are in the depths of hell.' A wise traveller when he comes to his inn, though many pleasant dishes are set before him, yet he forbears to taste, because of the reckoning which will be brought in: we are here all travellers to Jerusalem above; and though many baits of temptation are set before us, yet we should forbear, and think of the reckoning which will be brought in at death. With what stomach could Dionysius eat his dainties, when he imagined there was a naked sword hung over his head as he sat at meat? While the adulterer feeds on strange flesh, the sword of God's justice hangs over his head. Causinus speaks of a tree that grows in Spain that is of a sweet smell, and pleasant to the taste, but the juice of it is poisonous: the emblem of an harlot; she is perfumed with powders, and fair to look on, but poisonous and damnable to

the soul, Prov. vii. 26. 'She hath cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain by her.'

*Tenthly*, The adulterer doth not only wrong his own soul, but doth what in him lies to destroy the soul of another, and so kill two at once. And thus the adulterer is worse than the thief: for, suppose a thief rob a man, yea, take away his life, yet that man's soul may be happy; he may go to heaven as well as if he had died in his bed. But he who commits adultery endangers the soul of another, and deprives her of salvation so far as in him lies. Now, what a fearful thing is it to be an instrument to draw another to hell!

*Eleventhly*, The adulterer is abhorred of God, Prov. xxii. 14. 'The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit: he who is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.' What can be worse than to be abhorred of God? God may be angry with his own children; but for God to abhor a man, is the highest degree of hatred.

*Qu.* How doth the Lord shew his abhorrence of the adulterer?

*Ans.* In giving him up to a reprobate mind, and a seared conscience, Rom. i. 26. And now he is in such a condition that he cannot repent. This is to be abhorred of God; such a person stands upon the threshold of hell; and when death gives him a jog he tumbles in. All which may sound a retreat in our ears, and call us off from the pursuit of so damnable a sin as uncleanness. I will conclude with two scriptures, Prov. v. 8. 'Come not nigh the door of her house.' Prov. vii. 27. 'Her house is the way to hell.'

*Twelfthly*, Adultery is a sower of discord; it destroys peace and love, the two best flowers which grow in a family. Adultery sets husband against wife, and wife against husband; and so it causeth the 'joints of the same body to smite one against another.' And this division in a family works confusion: for, 'An house divided against itself cannot stand,' Luke xi. 17. *Omne divisibile est corruptibile.*

*Qu.* How may we abstain from this sin of adultery?

*Ans.* I shall lay down some directions, by way of antidote, to keep you from being infected with this sin. (1.) Come not into the company of a whorish woman; avoid her house, as a seaman doth a rock, Prov. v. 8. 'Come not near the door of her house.' He who would not have the plague, must not come near houses infected: every whore-house hath the plague in it. Not to beware of the occasion of sin, and yet pray, 'Lead us not into temptation,' is, as if one should put his finger in the candle, and yet pray that it may not be burnt. (2.) Look to your eyes. Much sin comes in by the eye, 2 Pet.

ii. 4. 'Having eyes full of adultery.' The eye tempts the fancy, and the fancy works upon the heart. A wanton amorous eye may usher in sin. Eve first saw the tree of knowledge, and then she took, Gen. iii. 6. First she looked, and then she loved. The eye oft sets the heart on fire; therefore Job laid a law upon his eyes, Job xxxi. 1. 'I made a covenant with my eyes, why then should I think upon a maid?' Democritus the philosopher plucked out his eyes, because he would not be tempted with vain objects: the scripture doth not bid us do so, but set a watch before our eyes. (3.) Look to your lips. Take heed of any unseemly word that may enkindle unclean thoughts in yourselves or others, 1 Cor. xv. 33. 'Evil communications corrupt good manners.' Impure discourse is the bellows to blow up the fire of lust. Much evil is conveyed to the heart by the tongue, Ps. cxli. 3. 'Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth.' (4.) Look in a special manner to your heart, Prov. iv. 23. 'Keep thy heart with all keeping.' Every one hath a tempter in his own bosom, Matth. xv. 19. 'Out of the heart come evil thoughts.' And thinking of sin makes way for the act of sin. Suppress the first risings of sin in your heart. As the serpent, when danger is near, keeps his head; so keep your heart, which is the spring from whence all lustful motions do proceed. (5.) Look to your attire. We read of the attire of an harlot, Prov. vii. 10. A wanton dress is a provocation to lust. Curlings and towerings of the hair, a painted face, naked breasts, are allurements to vanity. Where the bush is hung out, people will go in and taste of the liquor. Hierom saith, such as by their lascivious attire endeavour to draw others to lust, though no evil follow, yet these tempters shall be punished, because they offered poison to others, though they would not drink. (6.) Take heed of evil company. *Serpunt vitia et in proximum quemque transfiliunt*, Sen. Sin is a disease very catching: one man tempts another to sin, and hardens him in sin. There are three cords to draw men to adultery; the inclination of the heart, the persuasion of evil company, and the embraces of the harlot; and this three-fold cord is not easily broken, Ps. cvi. 18. 'A fire was kindled in their company.' I may allude to it, the fire of lust is kindled in bad company. (7.) Beware of going to plays. A play house is oft a preface to a whore-house, *Ludi præbent jëmina nequitiae*. We are bid to avoid all appearance of evil: are not plays the appearance of evil? Such sights are there, as are not fit to be beheld with chaste eyes. Both fathers and councils have shewn their dislike of going to plays. A learned divine observes, "That many have on their death-beds, confessed with tears, that the pollution of their bodies hath been occasioned by going to plays. (8.) Take heed of mixed dancing. *Instrumenta luxuriæ tripudia*. From dancing peo-



ple come to dalliance one with another, and from dalliance to uncleanness. There is, saith Calvin, for the most part, some unchaste behaviour in dancing. Dances draw the heart to folly by wanton gestures, by unchaste touches, by lustful looks. St. Chrysostom did inveigh against mixed dancing in his time. "We read (saith he) of a marriage-feast, and of virgins going before with lamps," Mat. xxv. 7. 'but of dancing there we read not.' Many have been ensnared by dancing; as the duke of Normandy, and others. *Saltatio ad adulteras non pudicas pertinet*, Ambr. Chrysostom saith, where dancing is, there the devil is: I speak chiefly of mixed dancing. And, whereas we read of dances in scripture, Exod. xv. those were sober and modest. They were not mixed dances, but pious and religious, being usually accompanied with singing praises to God. (9.) Take heed of lascivious books, and those pictures that provoke to lust; 1. Books. As the reading of the scripture doth stir up love to God, so reading of bad books doth stir up the mind to wickedness. I could name one who published a book to the world full of effeminate, amorous and wanton expressions; before he died, he was much troubled for it, and did burn that book, which did make so many burn in lust. 2. And to lascivious books, I may add lascivious pictures, which bewitch the eye, and are the incendiaries of lust. They secretly convey poison to the heart, *Qui aspicit-innocens aspectu fit nocens*. Popish pictures are not more prone to stir up idolatry, than unclean pictures are to stir up to concupiscence. (10.) Take heed of excess in diet. When gluttony and drunkenness lead the van, chambering and wantonness bring up the rear. *Vinum fomentum libidinis*: any wine inflames lust? and fulness of bread is made the cause of Sodom's uncleanness, Ezek. xvi. 49. The rankest weeds grow out of the fattest soil; uncleanness proceeds from excess, Jer. v. 8. 'When they were fed to the full, every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.' Get the 'golden bridle of temperance.' God allows recruits of nature, and what may fit us the better for his service; but beware of surfeit. Excess in the creature clouds the mind, chokes good affections, provokes lust. St. Paul did 'keep under his body,' 1 Cor. ix. 27. The flesh pampered is apt to rebel. *Corpus impinguatum recalcitrat*. (11.) Take heed of idleness. When a man is out of a calling, now he is fit to receive any temptation. We do not use to sow seed in fallow ground: but the devil sows most seed of temptation in such as lie fallow. Idleness is the cause of sodomy and uncleanness, Ezek. xvi. 49. When David was idle on the top of his leads, then he espied Bathsheba, and took her to him, 2 Sam. xi. 4. Hierom gave his friend this counsel, to be always well employed in God's vineyard; that, when the devil came, he might have no lei-

sure to listen to a temptation. (12.) To avoid fornication and adultery, let every man have a chaste, entire love to his own wife. Ezekiel's wife was the desire of his eyes, chap. xxiv. 16. When Solomon had dissuaded from strange women, he prescribes a remedy against it, Prov. v. 18. 'Rejoice with the wife of thy youth.' It is not the having a wife, but the loving a wife makes a man live chastly. He who loves his wife, whom Solomon calls his fountain, will not go abroad to drink of muddy, poisoned waters. Pure conjugal love is a gift of God, and comes from heaven; this, like the vestal fire, must be cherished, that it do not go out. He who loves not his wife, is the likeliest person to embrace the bosom of a stranger. (13.) Labour to get the fear of God into your hearts, Prov. xvi. 6. 'By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.' As the banks keep out the water, so the fear of the Lord keeps out uncleanness. Such as want the fear of God, want the bridle that should check them from sin. How did Joseph keep from his mistress' temptation? the fear of God pulled him back, Gen. xxxix. 9. 'How should I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' St. Bernard calls holy fear, *janitor animae*, "the door-keeper of the soul." As a nobleman's porter stands at the door, and keeps out vagrants, so the fear of God stands and keeps out all sinful temptations from entering. (14.) Get a delight in the word of God, Ps. cxix. 123. 'How sweet is thy word to my taste!' St. Chrysostom compares God's word to a garden. If we walk in this garden, and suck sweetness from the flowers of the promises, we shall never care to pluck the 'forbidden fruit.' *Sint castae deliciae meae scripturae*, Aug. The reason why persons keep after unchaste, sinful pleasures, is, because they have no better. Cæsar riding through a city, and seeing the women play with dogs and parrots, said "Sure they have no children." So they that sport with harlots, it is because they have no better pleasures. He that hath once tasted Christ in a promise, is ravished with delight; and how would he scorn a motion to sin! Job said, the word was his 'appointed food,' Job xxiii. 12. No wonder then he 'made a covenant with his eyes.' (15.) If you would abstain from adultery, use serious consideration. Consider,

1. God sees thee in the act of sin. He sees all thy curtain wickedness. He is *totus oculus*, all eye, Aug. The clouds are no canopy, the night is no curtain to hide thee from God's eye. Thou canst not sin, but thy Judge looks on, Jer. xv. 27. 'I have seen thy adulteries and thy neighings.' Jer. xxix. 33. 'They have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives; even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord.'

2. Few that are entangled in the sin of adultery recover out of the snare, Prov. ii. 19. 'None that go to her return again.'

That made some of the ancients conclude, that adultery was an unpardonable sin: but not so; David repented, and Mary Magdalene was a weeping penitent: her amorous eyes that had sparkled with lust, she seeks to be revenged of them, she washed Christ's feet with her tears: so that some have recovered out of the snare. But 'none that go to her return,' that is, 'very few;' it is rare to hear of any who are enchanted and bewitched with this sin of adultery, that recover out of it. Eccles. vii. 26. 'Her heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands.' 'Her heart is snares,' that is, she is subtil to deceive those who come to her; and, 'her hands are bands,' that is, her embraces are powerful to hold and intangle her lovers. Plutarch said of the Persian kings, 'They were captives to their concubines;' they were so inflamed, that they had no power to leave their company. This consideration may make all fearful of this sin: 'none that go to her return again.' Soft pleasures harden the heart.

3. Consider what the scripture saith, and it may *ponere obicem*, lay a bar in the way to this sin, Mal. iii. 5. 'I will be a swift witness against adulterers.' It is good when God is a witness 'for us,' when he witnesseth for our sincerity, as he did for Job: but it is sad to have God a 'witness against us.' 'I (saith God) will be a witness against the adulterer.' And who shall disprove his witness? and he is both witness and judge, Heb. xiii. 4. 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.'

4. Consider the sad farwel this sin of adultery leaves: it leaves an hell in the conscience, Prov. xv. 4. 'The lips of a strange woman drop as an honey comb, her end is bitter as worm-wood.' The goddess Diana was so artificially drawn, that she seemed to smile upon those that came into her temple, but frown on those that went out. So the harlot smiles on her lovers as they come to her, but at last comes the frown and sting, 'a dart strikes through their liver,' Prov. vii. 23. 'Her end is bitter.' When a man has been virtuous, the labour is gone, but the comfort remains: but when he hath been vicious and unclean, the pleasure is gone, but the sting remains. *Delectat in momentum cruciat in aeternum*, Jerom. When the senses have been feasted with unchaste pleasures, the soul is left to pay the reckoning. Stolen waters are sweet; but, as poison, tho' it be sweet in the mouth, it torments the bowels. Sin always ends in a tragedy. Memorable is that which Fincelius reports of a priest in Flanders, who enticed a maid to uncleanness. She objected how vile a sin it was; he told her, By authority from the pope he could commit any sin; so at last he drew her to his wicked purpose. But when they had been together a while, in came the devil, and took away the harlot from the priest's side, and, notwithstanding all her crying out



carried her away. If all that are guilty of bodily uncleanness in this nation, should have the devil come and carry them away, I fear more would be carried away than would be left behind.

(16.) Pray against this sin. Luther gave a lady this advice, that when any lust began to rise in her heart, she should go to prayer. Prayer is the best armour of proof: prayer quencheth the wild fire of lust. If prayer will 'cast out the devil,' why may it not cast out those lusts that come from the devil?

*Use ult.* 'If the body must be kept pure from defilement, much more the soul of a Christian must be kept pure.' This is the meaning of the commandment, not only that we should not stain our bodies with adultery, but that we should keep our souls pure. To have a chaste body, but an unclean soul, is like a fair face with bad lungs; or a gilt chimney piece, that is all soot within, 1 Pet. i. 16. 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.' The soul cannot be lovely to God, till it hath Christ's image stamped upon it, which image consists in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. iv. 14. The soul must especially be kept pure, because it is the chief place of God's residence, Eph. iii. 17. A king's palace must be kept clean, especially his presence-chamber. If the body of the temple, the soul, is the 'holy of holies,' this must be consecrated. We must not only keep our bodies from carnal pollution, but our souls from envy and malice.

*Qu. How shall we know our souls are pure?*

*Ans.* 1. If our souls are pure, then we flee from the appearance of evil, 1 Theff. v. 22. We will not do that which looks like sin. When Joseph's mistress did court and tempt him, he 'left his garment in her hand and fled,' Gen. xxxix. 12. It was suspicious to be near her. Polycarp would not be seen in company with Marceon the heretic, because it would not be good report.

2. If our souls are pure, this light of purity will shine forth. Aaron had 'Holiness to the Lord' written upon his golden plate: where there is sanctity in the soul, there 'Holiness to the Lord is engraven upon our life;' we are adorned with patience, humility, good works, and shine as 'Lights in the world,' Phil. ii. 15. carry Christ's picture in our conversations, 1 John ii. 6. O let us labour for this soul purity! 'without it there is no seeing of God,' Heb. xii. 14. 'What communion hath light with darkness?' And that we may keep our souls pure, (1.) Have recourse to the blood of Christ: this is the fountain set open for 'Sin and uncleanness,' Zech. xiii. 1. A soul steeped in the brinish tears of repentance, and bathed in the blood of Christ, is made pure. (2.) Pray much for pureness of soul, Ps. li. 10. 'Create in me a clean heart, O God.' Some pray for children, others for riches; but pray for soul-purity. Say, "Lord, tho' my body is kept pure, yet, Lord,

my soul is defiled, I pollute all I touch. O purge me with hyssop, let Christ's blood sprinkle me, let the Holy Ghost come upon me and anoint me. O make me evangelically pure, that I may be translated to heaven, and placed among the cherubims, where I shall be as holy as thou wouldst have me to be, and as happy as I can desire to be."

## OF THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. xx. 15. *Thou shalt not steal.*

As the holiness of God sets himself against uncleanness, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery;' so the justice of God sets him against rapine and robbery, 'Thou shalt not steal.' The thing forbidden in the commandment, is meddling with another man's property, 'Thou shalt not steal.' The civil lawyers define, *furtum*, stealth or theft, to be "the laying hands unjustly on that which is another's;" the invading another's right.

Qu. 1. *Whence doth theft arise?*

Ans. 1. The internal causes are, (1.) Unbelief. A man hath an high distrust of God's providence: 'Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?' Ps. lxxviii. 19. So saith the unbeliever, Can God spread a table for me? No, he cannot. Therefore he is resolved, he will spread a table for himself, but it shall be of other men's cost, and both first and second course shall be served in with stolen goods. (2.) Covetousness. The Greek word for covetousness signifies "an immoderate desire of getting;" this is the root of theft. A man covets more than his own, and this itch of covetousness makes him scratch what he can from another. Achan's covetous humour made him steal the wedge of gold, which wedge did cleave asunder his soul from God, Joshua vii. 21.

2. The external cause of theft, is, Satan's solicitation: Judas was a thief, John xii. 6. How came he to be a thief? 'Satan entered into him,' John xiii. 27. The devil is the great master-thief, he robbed us of our coat of innocency, and he persuades men to take up his trade: he tells men how bravely they shall live by thieving, and how they may catch an estate. And as Eve listened to the serpent's voice, so do they; and, as birds of prey, live upon spoil and rapine.

Qu. 2. *How many sorts of thefts are there?*

Ans. I. There is stealing from God; and so they are thieves who rob any part of God's day from him—'Remember to keep holy the sabbath day.'—Not a part of the day only, but the

whole day must be dedicated to God. And lest any should forget this, the Lord hath prefixed a *memento*, 'remember.' Therefore to cut God short, and after morning sacrifice, to spend the other part of the sabbath in vanity and pleasure: this is 'spiritual thievery,' 'tis to rob God of his due: and the very heathens will rise up in judgment against such Christians; for the heathens (as Macrobius notes) did observe a whole day to their false gods.

II. There is a stealing from others, 1<sup>st</sup>, A stealing away their souls: and so heretics are thieves: by robbing men of the truth, they rob them of their souls. 2<sup>dly</sup>, A stealing away their money and goods from them: and under this head of stealing away others money, there may be several arraigned for thieves.

(1.) The high-way thief, who takes a purse, contrary to the letter of this commandment, Lev. xix. 13. 'Thou shalt not rob thy neighbour.' Mark. x. 19. 'Do not steal.' This is not the violence which takes the 'kingdom of heaven,' Mat. xi. 12.

(2.) The house-thief, who purloins and filcheth out of his master's cash, or steals his wares and drugs. The apostle saith, 'Some have entertained angels into their houses unawares,' Heb. xiii. 2. But many masters have entertained thieves into their houses unawares. The house-thief is an hypocrite, as well as a thief; he hath demure looks, and pretends he is helping his master, when he only helps to rob him.

(3.) The thief that shrouds himself under law, as the unjust attorney or lawyer, who prevaricates and deals falsely with his client. This is to steal from the client. By deceit and prevarication the lawyer robs the client of his land, and may be the means to ruin his family; he is no better than a thief in God's account.

(4.) The church-thief or pluralist, who holds several benefices, but seldom or never preacheth to the people: he gets the golden fleece, but lets his flock starve, Ezek. xxxiv. 2. 'Wo be to the shepherds of Israel:' v. 8. 'They feed themselves, and feed not my flock.' These ministers will be indicted for thieves at God's bar.

(5.) The *shop-thief*, he steals in selling. (1.) Who useth false weights and measures; and so steals from others what is their due. Amos v. 8. 'Who makes the ephah small.' The ephah was a measure the Jews used in selling; they made the ephah small, gave scant measure, which was plain stealing, Hos. xii. 7. 'The balances of deceit are in his hand.' Men by making their weights lighter, make their accounts heavier. (2.) He steals in selling, who puts excessive prices on his commodities. He takes thrice as much for a commodity as it cost him, or as it is worth: to over-reach others in selling, is to steal men's



money from them, Lev. xix. 13. 'Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him.' To defraud him is to rob him; this over-reaching others in selling (which is a cunning way of stealing) is both against law and gospel. 1. It is against the law of God, Lev. xxv. 14. 'If thou sell ought to thy neighbour, ye shall not oppress one another.' And, 2. Against gospel, 1 Thess. iv. 6. 'Let no man go beyond, or defraud his brother.' It is stealing.

(6.) The *Usurer*, who takes of others even to extortion: he seems to help another by letting him have money in his necessity, but gets him into bonds, and sucks out his very blood and marrow. I read of a woman whom Satan had bound, Luke xiii. 16. And truly he is almost in as bad a condition whom the usurer hath bound: the oppressing usurer is a robber. An usurer once asked a prodigal, when he would leave spending? Saith the prodigal, then I will leave spending what is my own, when thou leavest off stealing from others. Zaccheus was an extortioner, and after his conversion he made restitution, Luke xix. 8. He thought all he got by extortion was theft.

(7.) The *feoffee* in trust, who hath the orphan's estate committed to him: he is deputed to be his guardian, and manage his estate for him; and he curtails the estate, and gets a fleece out of it for himself, and wrongs the orphan. This is a thief: this is worse than taking a purse, because he betrays his trust, which is the highest piece of treachery and injustice.

(8.) The borrower, who borrows money from others with an intention never to pay them again. Pl. xxxvii. 21. 'The wicked borroweth and payeth not again.' What is it but thievery to take money and goods from others, and not restore them again? The prophet Elisha bade the widow sell he roil, and pay her debts, and then live upon the rest, 2 Kings iv. 7.

(9.) The last sort of theft is, the receiver of stolen goods. The receiver if he be not the principal, yet he is accessory to the theft, and the law makes him guilty. The thief steals the money, and the receiver holds the sack to put it in. The root would die if it were not watered, and thievery would cease if it were not encouraged by the receiver. I am apt to think, he who doth not scruple to take stolen goods into his house, would as little scruple to take a purse.

Qu. *What are the aggravations of this sin of stealing?*

Ans. 1. To steal when one has no need. To be a rich thief.

2. To steal sacrilegiously. To devour things set apart to holy uses, Prov. xx. 25. 'It is a snare to the man which devoureth that which is holy.' Such an one was Dionysius, who robbed the temple, and took away the silver vessels.

3. To commit the sin of theft against checks of conscience,

and examples of God's justice ; this is like the dye to the wool, it doth dye the sin of a crimson colour.

4. To rob the widow and orphan, *Exod. xxii. 22.* ' Ye shall not afflict the widow or fatherless : ' *peccatam clamans* ; ' If they cry unto me, I will surely hear them.'

5. To rob the poor : How did David disdain that the rich man should take away the poor man's lamb ! ' As the Lord liveth, he shall surely die,' *2 Sam. xii. 5.* What is the inclosing of commons, but a robbing of the poor ?

III. There is a stealing from a man's self. A man may be a thief to himself.

*Qu. How so ?*

*Ans.* 1. By niggardliness. The niggard is a thief ; he steals from himself, in that he doth not allow himself what is fitting. He thinks that lost which is bestowed upon himself : he robs himself of necessaries, *Ecc. vi. 2.* ' A man to whom God hath given riches, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof.' He gluts his chest, and starves his belly : He is like the ass that is loaded with gold, but feeds upon thistles : He robs himself of that which God allows him. This is indeed to be punished with riches : To have an estate, and want an heart to take the comfort of it, this man is a thief to himself.

2. A man may be a thief to himself, and rob himself by prodigality, viz. wasting his estate. The prodigal lavisheth gold out of the bag ; he is like Crates the philosopher, who threw his gold into the sea. The prodigal boils a great estate to nothing : this is to be a thief to a man's self, to spend away that estate from himself, which might conduce to the comfort of life.

3. He is a thief to himself, by idleness, when he mispends his time. To spend one's hours in pleasure and vanity, this is to rob himself, of that precious time which God hath given him to work out salvation. Time is a rich commodity, because on the well-spending this present time, an happy eternity depends. He that spends his time idly and vainly, is a thief to himself ; he robs himself of his golden seasons, and, by consequence of salvation.

4. A man may be a thief to himself, by suretiship, *Prov. xxii. 26.* ' Be thou not one of them that are sureties for debt.' The creditor comes upon the surety for the debt, and so by paying another's debt he is a thief to himself, he undoes himself. Let not any man say, he should have been counted unkind, if he had not entered into bonds for his friend : better thy friend count thee unkind, than all men count thee unwise. Lend another what you can spare ; nay, give him if he needs, but never be a surety : it is no wisdom for a man so to help another, as to undo himself. This is to rob himself and his family.

*Use I.* It confutes the doctrine of community, that all things are common, and one man hath a right to another's estate. The scripture confutes it, Deut. xxiii. 25. 'When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, thou shalt not move a sickle into thy neighbour's corn.' Propriety must be observed: God hath set this eighth commandment as a hedge about a man's estate, and this hedge cannot be broken without sin. If all things be common, then there is no stealth, and so this commandment were in vain.

*Use II.* It reproves such as live upon stealing. Instead of living by faith, they live by their shifts. The apostle exhorteth, that 'every man eat his own bread,' 2 Theff. iii. 12. The thief doth not eat of his own bread, but of another's. If there be any who are guilty of this sin, let them labour to recover out of the snare of the devil, by repentance, and let them shew their repentance by restitution. *Non remittitur peccatum nisi restituatur ablatum*, Aug. "Without restitution, no remission." Luke xix. 8. 'If I have taken away any thing from any man unjustly, I restore him fourfold.' It may suffice to restore ill-gotten goods by one's own hand, or by proxy. Better a thousand times restore goods unlawfully gotten, than to stuff one's pillow with thorns, and have guilt trouble one's conscience upon a death-bed.

*Use III. Exhort.* To all to take heed of this sin of thieving; it is a sin against the light of nature. Some may go to excuse this sin: hear the thief's plea; it is a coarse wool will take no dye, and a bad sin indeed that hath no excuse. "I am (saith one) grown low in the world, and trading is bad, and I have no other way to a livelihood."

*Ans.* 1. This shews a great distrust of God, as if he could not provide for thee without thy sin. 2. This shews sin is gotten to a great height, that, because a man is grown low in the world, therefore he will, *Acheronta movere*, go to the devil for a livelihood. Abraham would not have it said, that 'the king of Sodom had made him rich,' Gen. xiv. 22. O let it never be said, that the devil hath made thee rich! 3. Thou oughtest not to undertake any action which thou canst not pray for a blessing upon: but, if thou livest on thieving, thou canst not pray for a blessing upon stolen goods; therefore take heed of this sin, *lucrum in acru, damnum in conscientia*, Aug. Take heed of getting the world with the loss of heaven. To dissuade all from this horrid sin, consider,

(1.) Thieves are the caterpillars of the earth, enemies to civil society.

(2.) God hates them. In the law, the Cormorant was unclean, Lev. xi. 17. because a thievish, devouring creature, a bird of prey; by which God shewed his hatred of this sin.



(3.) The thief is a terror to himself, he is always in fear, Ps. liii. 5. 'There were they in great fear;' true of the thief. Guilt breeds fear: if he hear but the shaking of a tree, his heart shakes. It is said of Catiline, he was afraid of every noise. If a briar doth but take hold of a thief's garment, he is afraid it is the officer to apprehend him; and fear hath 'torment in it,' 1 John iv. 18.

(4.) The judgments that follow this sin, 'Achan the thief was stoned to death,' Joshua vii. and Zech. v. 2. 'What seest thou? And I said, a flying roll,' verse 3. 'This is the curse that goeth over the face of the earth; I will bring it forth, saith the Lord, and it shall enter into the house of the thief.' Fabius, a Roman censor, condemned his own son to die for theft. Thieves die with ignominy, the ladder is their preferment: and there is a worse thing than death, while they rob others of money, they rob themselves of salvation.

Qu. *What is to be done to avoid stealing?*

Ans. 1. Live in a calling, Eph. iv. 28. 'Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands,' &c. Such as stand idle, the devil hires them, and puts them to the pilfering trade. An idle person tempts the devil to tempt him.

2. Be content with the estate God hath given you, Heb. xiii. 5. 'Be content with such things as ye have.' Theft is the daughter of avarice: study contentment. Believe that condition best, God hath carved out to you. God can bless that little meal in the barrel. We shall not need these things long, we shall carry nothing out of the world with us but our winding sheet. If we have but enough to bear our charges to heaven, it is sufficient.



## OF THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 16. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*

THE tongue, which at first was made to be an organ of God's praise, is now become an instrument of unrighteousness. This commandment binds the tongue to its good behaviour; God hath set two fences to keep in the tongue, the teeth and lips: and this commandment is a third fence set about it, that it should not break forth into evil; 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.' This commandment hath a prohibitory, and a mandatory part: the first is set down in plain words, the other is clearly implied.

I. *The prohibitory part of the commandment*, or, what it forbids in general. It forbids any thing which may tend to the disparagement or prejudice of our neighbour. More particularly, two things are forbidden in this commandment, (1.) Slandering. (2.) False witness.

(1.) *Slandering our neighbour.* This is a sin against the ninth commandment. The scorpion carries his poison in his tail, the slanderer carries his poison in his tongue. Slandering, “is to report things of others unjustly,” Psal. xxxv. 11. ‘They laid things to my charge which I knew not.’ It is usual to bring in a Christian beheaded of his good name: they raised a slander of Paul, that he should preach, ‘Men might do evil, that good might come of it,’ Rom. iii. 8. ‘We are slanderously reported; and some affirm that we say, let us do evil, that good may come.’ Eminency is commonly blasted by slander. Holiness itself is no shield for slander. The lamb’s innocency will not preserve it from the wolf.—Christ was the most innocent upon earth, yet was reported to be a friend of sinners: John Baptist, a man of a holy austere life, yet they said of him ‘he hath a devil,’ Mat. xi. 18. The scripture calls slandering, smiting with the tongue, Jer. xviii. 18. ‘Come and let us smite him with the tongue.’ You may smite another and never touch him. *Majora sunt lingue vulnera quam gladii*, Aug. The wounds of the tongue no physician can heal: and to pretend friendship to a man, yet slander him, is most odious. St. Hierom speaks thus, “The Arian faction made a shew of kindness; they kissed my hands, but slandered me, and sought my life.” And, as it is a sin against this commandment, to raise a false report of another; so it is a sin to receive a false report before we have examined it, Psal. xv. 1. ‘Lord, who shall dwell in thy holy hill?’ *Quis ad cælum?* ver. 3. ‘He that backbiteth not, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.’ We must not only not raise a false report, but not take it up. He that raiseth a slander, carries the devil in his tongue; and he that receives it, carries the devil in his ear.

(2.) The second thing forbidden in this commandment is, false witness. Here three sins are condemned: (1.) Speaking. (2.) Witnessing. (3.) Swearing, that which is false, *contra proximum*.

1. Speaking that which is false, Prov. xii. 22. ‘Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.’ To lie, is to speak that which one knows to be an untruth. There is nothing more contrary to God than a lie. The Holy Ghost is called the ‘Spirit of truth,’ 1 John iv. 5, 6. Lying is a sin that doth not go alone; it ushers in other sins: Absalom told his father a lie, that he was going to pay his vow at Hebron, 2 Sam. xv. 7. and that

lie was a preface to his treason. Where there is a lie in the tongue, it shews the devil is in the heart, Acts xv. 3. 'Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie?' Lying is such a sin, as unfits men for civil society. How can you converse or bargain with him, that you cannot trust a word he saith? This is a sin which highly provokes God. Annanias and Sapphira were struck dead for telling a lie, Acts v. 5. The furnace of hell is heated for liars, Rev. xxii. 15. 'Without are forcerers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.' Oh abhor this sin! *Quicquid dixeris justum putes*, Hierom. When thou speakest, let thy word be as authentic as thy oath. Imitate God, who is the pattern of truth. Pythagoras being asked, what made men like God? answered, *cum vere loquuntur*, when they speak truth. It is made the character of a man that shall go to heaven, Psal. xv. 2. 'He speaketh the truth from his heart.'

2. That which is condemned in the commandment is, witnessing that which is false; 'thou shalt not bear false witness.' There is a twofold bearing of false witness. (1.) There is a bearing of false witness for another. 2. A bearing false witness against another.

1<sup>st</sup>, A bearing false witness for another. When we do give our testimony for a person that is criminal and guilty, we justify him as if he were innocent, Isa. iii. 23. 'Which justify the wicked for a reward.' He that goes to make a wicked man just, makes himself unjust.

2<sup>dly</sup>, There is a bearing false witness against another, *i. e.* when we accuse another in open court falsely. This is to imitate the devil, who is the 'accuser of the brethren.' Though the devil is no adulterer, yet he is a false witness, Solomon saith, Prov. xxv. 18. 'A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour, is a hammer and a sword:' In his face he is hardened like an hammer; he cannot blush, he cares not what lie he witnesseth to: and he is a sword; his tongue is a sword to wound him he witnesseth against in his goods or life: thus, 1 Kings xxi. 13. 'There came in two men, children of Belial, and witnessed against Naboth, saying, Naboth blasphemed God and the king:' and their witness took away his life. The queen of Persia being sick, the magician accused two godly virgins, that they had by charms procured the queen's sickness; whereupon she caused these virgins to be sawn asunder. A false witness doth pervert the place of judicature: he corrupts the judge, by making him pronounce a wrong sentence, and causes the innocent to suffer. Vengeance will find out the false witness, Prov. xxix. 4. 'A false witness shall not be unpunished, Deut. xix. 18, 19. 'If the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother, then shall ye do unto him as he



had thought to have done unto his brother :’ *i. e.* If he had thought to have taken away his life, his own shall go for it.

3. That which is condemned in the commandment, is swearing that which is false. When men take a false oath, and by that take away the life of another, Zech. viii. 17. ‘ Love no false oath.’ chap. v. 2. ‘ What seest thou ? I said, a flying roll.’ verses 3, 4. ‘ This is the curse that goeth forth, and it shall enter, saith the Lord, into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name : and it shall consume his house, with the timber and stones of it.’ The Scythians made a law, when a man did bind two sins together, a lie with an oath, he was to lose his head ; because this sin did take away all truth and faith from among men. The devil hath taken great possession of such who dare swear to a lie. This is a manifest breach of this commandment.

*Use I. Branch 1.* It reproves the church of Rome, who will dispense with a lie, or a false oath, if it be to promote the catholic cause. They approve of an officious lie ; they hold some sins to be lawful ; they may as well hold some lies to be lawful. God hath no need of our lie. It is not lawful to tell a lie *propter Dei gloriam*, if we were sure to bring glory to God by it, as Austin speaks.

*Branch 2.* It reproves those who make no conscience of slandering others ; they come under the breach of this commandment, Ps. l. 20. ‘ Thou fittest and slanderest thy own mother’s son,’ Jer. xx. 10. ‘ Report, say they, and we will report,’ Ezra iv. 15. ‘ This city (*i. e.* Jerusalem) is a rebellious city, and hurtful to kings and provinces.’ Paul was slandered as a mover of sedition, and the head of a faction, Acts xxiv. 5. The same word signifies both a slanderer and a devil, 1 Tim. iii. 11. ‘ Not slanderers.’ In the Greek, Not devils. Some think it is no great matter, to misreport and slander others ; know that this is to act the part of a devil. Clipping a man’s credit, to make it weigh lighter, is worse than clipping of coin. The slanderer wounds three at once : he wounds him that he slanders ; and he wounds him to whom he reports the slander, by causing uncharitable thoughts to arise up in his mind against the party slandered ; and he wounds his own soul, by reporting that of another which is false. This is a great sin ; and I would, I could not say, it is common. You may kill a man as well in his name as in his person. Some are loth to take away their neighbour’s goods ; conscience would fly in their face : but better take away their corn out of their field, their wares out of their shop, than take away their good name. This is a sin you can never make them reparation for ; a blot in a man’s name, being like a blot on white paper, which will never be got out. Surely God will visit for this sin. If idle words shall be ac-

counted for, shall not unjust slanders? The Lord will make inquisition one day, as well for names as for blood. Oh therefore take heed of this sin! it is a breach of the ninth commandment. Was it a sin under the law to defame a virgin, Deut. xxii. 19. And, is it not a greater sin to defame a saint, who is a member of Christ! The heathens, by the light of nature, abhorred this sin of slandering. Diogenes used to say, "Of all wild beasts, a slanderer is the worst." Antonius made a law, that, if a person could not prove the crime he reported another to be guilty of, he should be put to death.

*Branch 3.* It reproves them who are so wicked as to bear false witness against others. These are monsters in nature, unfit to live in a civil society. Eusebius relates of one Narcissus, a man famous for piety, who was accused by two false witnesses of unchastity: and to prove their accusation, they bound it with oaths and curses after this manner: one said, 'If I speak not true, I pray God I may perish by fire:' the other said, 'If I speak not true, I wish I may be deprived of my sight.' It pleased God, that the first witness who forswore himself, his house beset on fire, he was burned in the flame: the other witness being troubled in conscience, confessed his perjury, and continued so long weeping, that he wept himself blind. Jezebel, who suborned two false witnesses against Naboth, she was thrown down out of a window, and 'the dogs licked her blood,' 2 Kings ix. 33. O tremble at this sin! a perjured person is the devil's excrement. He is cursed in his name, and seared in his conscience. Hell gapes for such a wind-fall.

*Use II. Branch 1.* It exhorts all to take heed of the breach of this commandment, of lying, slandering, and bearing false witness; and to avoid these sins.

1. Get the fear of God. Why doth David say, 'the fear of the Lord is clean?' Ps. xix. 8. Because it cleanseth the heart of malice, it cleanseth the tongue of slander. 'The fear of the Lord is clean:' it is to the soul as lightening to the air which cleanseth it.

2. Get love to your neighbour, Lev. xxi. 18. If we love a friend, we will not speak or attest any thing to his prejudice. Men's minds are cankered with envy and hatred; hence comes slandering and false-witnessing. Love is a lovely grace; 'love thinks no evil,' 1 Cor. xiii. 5. It makes the best interpretation of another's words. Love is a well-wisher, and it is rare to speak ill of him we wish well to. Love is that which cements Christians together; it is the healer of division, and the hinderer of slander.

*Branch 2.* To such whose lot it is to meet with slanderers and false accusers, (1.) Labour to make a sanctified use of it. When Shimei railed on David, David made a sanctified use of

it, 2. Sam: xvi. 10. 'The Lord hath said to him, curse David.' So, if you are slandered or falsely accused, make a good use of it. See if you have no sin unrepented of, for which God may suffer you to be calumniated and reproached. See if you have not at any time wronged others in their name, and said that of them which you cannot prove; then lay your hand on your mouth, and confess the Lord is righteous to let you fall under the scourge of the tongue. (2.) If you are slandered or falsely accused, but know your own innocency, be not too much troubled, let this be your rejoicing, the witness of your conscience. *Murus aheneus esto nil conscire sibi.*—A good conscience is a wall of brass, that will be able to stand against a false witness. As no flattery can heal a bad conscience, so no slander can hurt a good. God will clear the names of his people, Pl. xxxvii. 6. 'He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light.' God, as he will wipe away tears from the eyes, so he will wipe off reproaches from the name. Believers shall come forth out of all their slanders and reproaches, as 'the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.'

*Branch 3.* It should exhort such to be very thankful to God; whom God hath preserved from slander and false witness. Job calls it 'The scourge of the tongue,' chap. v. 21. As a rod doth scourge the back, so the slanderer's tongue doth scourge the name. It is a great mercy to be kept from the scourge of the tongue; a mercy, that God stops malignant mouths from bearing false witness. What mischief may not a lying report or a false oath do? One destroys the name, the other the life. It is the Lord who muzzles the mouths of the wicked, and keeps those dogs, that snarl at us, from flying upon us, Psal. xxxi. 20. 'Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion, from the strife of tongues.' It is, I suppose, an allusion to kings, who being resolved to protect their favourites against the accusations of men, take them into their bed-chamber, or bosom, where none may touch them: so God hath a pavilion, or secret hiding-place for his favourites, where he preserves their credit and reputation untouched; he keeps them from the 'strife of tongues.' This is a mercy we ought to acknowledge to God.

II. The mandatory part of this commandment implied; that is, "That we stand up for others, and vindicate them, when they are injured by lying lips." This is the sense of the commandment, not only that we should not slander, or falsely accuse others; but that we should witness for them, and stand up in their defence, when we know them to be traduced. A man may wrong another as well by silence as by slander; when he knows him to be wrongfully accused, yet doth not speak in his behalf. If others cast false aspersions on any, we should wipe



them off. The apostles (who were filled with the wine of the Spirit) being charged with drunkenness, Peter was their compurgator, and openly cleared their innocence, Acts ii. 15. 'These are not drunken, as ye suppose.' Jonathan knowing David to be a worthy man, and all those things Saul said of him to be slanders, vindicated David, 1 Sam. xix. 4, 5. 'David hath not sinned against thee, but his works to thee-ward have been very good. Wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, and slay David without a cause?' When the primitive Christians were falsely accused for incest, and killing their children, Tertullian made a famous apology in their vindication. This is to act the part both of a friend and of a Christian, to be an advocate for another, when he is wronged in his good name.

## OF THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 17. *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, nor his Man-servant, nor his Maid-servant, nor his Ox, nor his Ass, nor any Thing that is thy Neighbour's.*

THIS commandment forbids, (1.) Covetousness in general, 'Thou shalt not covet.' (2.) In particular, 'Thy neighbour's house, thy neighbour's wife,' &c.

1. It forbids covetousness in general, 'Thou shalt not covet.' It is lawful to use the world, yea, and to desire so much of it as may, (1.) Keep us from the temptation of poverty, Prov. xxx. 8. 'Give me not poverty, lest I steal, and take the name of my God in vain.' (2.) As may enable us to honour God with works of mercy, Prov. iii. 9. 'Honour the Lord with thy substance.' But all the danger is, when the world gets into the heart. The water is useful for the sailing of the ship; all the danger is, when the water gets into the ship; so the fear is, when the world gets into the heart, 'Thou shalt not covet.'

Qu. *What is it to covet?*

Ans. There are two words in the Greek, which set forth the nature of covetousness. 1. *Pleonexia*, which signifies "an insatiable desire of getting the world." Covetousness is a dry dropsy. Austin defines covetousness, *Plus velle quam sat est*; to desire more than enough; to aim at a great estate; to be like the daughters of the horse-leech, crying, 'Give, give,' Prov. xxx. 15. Or like Behemoth, Job xl. 23. 'He trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.' 2. *Phylarmyria*, which signifies an "inordinate love of the world." The world is the idol; it is so loved, that a man will not part with it to any good

use; this is to come under the indictment of covetousness. He may be said to be covetous, not only who gets the world unrighteously, but who loves the world inordinately. But, for a more full answer to the question, 'What is it to covet?' I shall shew you in six particulars, when a man may be said to be given to covetousness.

1. When his thoughts are wholly taken up about the world. As a good man's thoughts are still in heaven, he is thinking of Christ's love and eternal recompence, Pl. cxxxix. 18. 'When I awake, I am still with thee,' that is divine contemplation! so a covetous man is still with the world; his mind is wholly taken up about it; he can think of nothing but his shop or farm. The fancy is a mint-house, and most of the thoughts a covetous man mints are worldly: he is always plotting and projecting about the things of this life; like a virgin that hath all her thoughts running upon her suitor.

2. A man may be said to be given to covetousness, when he takes more pains for the getting of earth, than for the getting of heaven. He will turn every stone, break his sleep, take many a weary step for the world; but will take no pains for Christ or heaven. The Gauls, who were an ancient people of France, after they had tasted of the sweet wine of the Italian grape, they enquired after the country, and never rested till they had arrived at it; so a covetous man having had a relish of the world, pursues after it, and never leaves till he hath got it; but he neglects the things of eternity. He could be content if salvation would drop into his mouth, as a ripe fig drops into the mouth of the eater, Nahum iii. 12. But he is loth to put himself to too much sweat or trouble to obtain Christ or salvation. He hunts for the world, he wisheth only for heaven.

3. A man may be said to be given to covetousness, when all his discourse is about the world, John iii. 31. 'He that is of the earth, speaketh of the earth.' As it is a sign of godliness to be still speaking of heaven, to have the tongue tuned to the language of Canaan, Eccl. x. 12. 'The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious;' he speaks as if he had been already in heaven; so, a sign of a man given to covetousness, he is speaking of secular things, his wares and drugs. A covetous man's breath, like a dying man's smells strong of the earth. As they said to Peter, 'Thy speech bewrayeth thee,' Matth. xxvi. 73. So a covetous man's speech bewrayeth him: He is like the fish in the gospel, which had a piece of money in the mouth, Mat. xvii. 27. *Verba sunt speculum mentis*, Bern. The words are the looking-glass of the heart, they shew what is within; *Ex abundantia cordis*.

4. A man is given to covetousness, when he doth so set his heart upon worldly things, that, for the love of them, he will

part with heavenly ; for the ‘wedge of gold,’ he will part with the ‘pearl of price.’ The young man in the gospel, when Christ said, ‘Sell all and come and follow me ;’ *abiit tristis*, ‘he went away sorrowful,’ Matth. xix. 22. He would rather part with Christ, than with his earthly possessions. Cardinal Bourbon said, he would forego his part in paradise, if he might keep his cardinalship in Paris. When it comes to a critical point, that men must either relinquish their estate or Christ, and they will rather part with Christ, and a good conscience, than with their estate ; it is a clear case they are possessed with the devil of covetousness.

5. A man is given to covetousness, when he overloads himself with worldly business. He hath many irons in the fire ; he is in this sense a pluralist, he takes so much business upon him, that he cannot find time to serve God ; he hath scarce time to eat his meat, but no time to pray. When a man doth overcharge himself with the world, and, as Martha, cumber himself about many things, that he cannot have time for his soul, sure he is under the power of covetousness.

6. He is given to covetousness whose heart is so set upon the world, that, to get it, he cares not what unlawful indirect means he useth : he will have the world *per fas et nefas* ; he will wrong and defraud, and raise his estate upon the ruins of another, Hof. xii. 7, 8. ‘The balances of deceit are in his hand, he loveth to oppress.’ And Ephraim said, ‘yet I am become rich.’ Pope Silvester II. did sell his soul to the devil for a popedom.

*Use.* Take heed and beware of covetousness, Luke xii. 15. It is a direct breach of this tenth commandment. Covetousness is a moral vice, it infects and pollutes the whole soul. The sin.

(1.) It is a subtil sin, a sin that many do not so well discern in themselves ; as some have the scurvy yet do not know it. This sin can dress itself in the attire of virtue. It is called the ‘cloak of covetousness.’ 1 Thess. ii. 5. Covetousness is a sin that wears a cloak, it cloaks itself under the name of frugality and good husbandry. It hath many pleas and excuses for itself, more than any other sin ; as the providing for one’s family. The more subtil the sin is, the less discernible.

(2.) Covetousness is a dangerous sin, it checks all that is good. It is an enemy to grace ; it damps good affections, as the earth puts out the fire. The hedge-hog, in the fable, came to the coney burrows in stormy weather, and desired harbour : but when once he had gotten entertainment, he set up his prickles, and did never leave till he had thrust the poor coneys out of their burrows ; so covetousness, by fair pretences, wins itself into the heart ; but, as soon as you have let it in, it will never



leave till it hath choaked all good beginnings, and thrust all religion out of your hearts. “Covetousness hinders the efficacy of the word preached.” In the parable, the thorns (which Christ expounded to be the cares of this life) choaked the good seed, Matth. xiii. 7. Many sermons lie dead, buried in earthly hearts. We preach to men, to get their hearts in heaven; but where covetousness is predominant, it chains them to the earth, and makes them like the woman which Satan had bowed together, that she could not lift up herself, Luke xiii. 11. You may as well bid an elephant fly in the air, as a covetous man live by faith. We preach to men to give freely to Christ’s poor; but covetousness makes them to be like him in the gospel who had ‘a withered hand,’ Mark iii. 1. They have a withered hand and cannot stretch it out to the poor. It is impossible to be earthly minded and charitably minded. Thus covetousness obstructs the efficacy of the word, and makes it prove abortive. Such whose hearts are rooted in the earth, will be so far from profiting by the word, that they will be ready rather to deride it, Luke xvi. 14. The pharisees, who were covetous, ‘derided him.’

(3.) Covetousness is a mother-sin, a radical vice, 1 Tim. vi. 10. ‘the love of money is the root of all evil.’

—*Quid non mortalia pectora cogit auri sacra fames*; —Hor.

He who hath an earthly itch, a greedy desire of getting the world, hath in him the root of all sin. Covetousness is a mother sin. I shall make it appear that covetousness is a breach of all the ten commandments. (1.) It breaks the first commandment, ‘thou shalt have no other gods but one.’ The covetous man hath more gods than one; mammon is his god. He hath a god of gold, therefore he is called an idolater, Col. iii. 5. (2.) Covetousness breaks the second commandment, ‘Thou shalt not make any graven image, thou shalt not bow down thyself to them.’ A covetous man bows down, tho’ not to the graven image in the church, yet to the graven image in his coin. (3.) Covetousness is a breach of the third commandment, ‘Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.’ Absalom’s design was to get his father’s crown, there was covetousness; but he talks of ‘paying his vow to God,’ there he took God’s name in vain. (4.) Covetousness is a breach of the fourth commandment, ‘Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.’ A covetous man doth not keep the sabbath holy; he will ride to fairs on a sabbath: instead of reading in the bible, he will cast up his accounts. (5.) Covetousness is a breach of the fifth commandment, ‘Honour thy father and thy mother.’ A covetous person will not honour his father, if he doth not feed him with money; nay, he will get his father to make over his estate to him in his lifetime, and so the father

shall be at the son's command. (6.) Covetousness is a breach of the sixth commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill.' Covetous Ahab killed Naboth, to get his vineyard, 1 Kings xxi 13. How many have swimm'd to the crown in blood ! (7.) Covetousness is a breach of the seventh commandment, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' Covetousness causeth uncleanness; you read of the 'hire of a whore,' Deut. xxiii. 18. An adulteress for money sets both conscience and chastity to sale. (8.) Covetousness is a breach of the eighth commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal.' Covetousness is the root of theft; covetous Achan stole the wedge of gold : therefore thieves and covetous are put together, 1 Cor. vi. 10. (9.) Covetousness is a breach of the ninth commandment, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness.' What makes the perjurer take a false oath but covetousness? He hopes for a dividend. And, (10.) It is plainly a breach of the last commandment, 'Thou shalt not covet.' The mammonist covets his neighbour's house and goods, and endeavours to get them into his own hands. Thus you see how vile a sin covetousness is, it is a mother-sin, it is a plain breach of every one of the ten commandments.

(4.) Covetousness is a sin dishonourable to religion. For such as say their hopes are above, yet their hearts are below : for them who profess to be above the stars, to 'lick the dust' off the serpent; to be born of God, yet buried in the earth; how dishonourable is this to religion ! The lapwing wears a little coronet on its head, yet feeds on dung; an emblem of such as profess to be crowned kings and priests unto God, yet feed immoderately on the terrene dunghill comforts, Jer. xlv. 5. 'And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not : What, thou Barak, who art ennobled by the new-birth, and art illustrious by thy office, a Levite, dost thou seek earthly things, and seek them now? When the ship is sinking, art thou trimming thy cabin? O do not so degrade thyself, nor blot thy scutcheon! 'seekest thou great things? seek them not.' The higher grace is, the less earthly should Christians be; the higher the sun is, the shorter always is the shadow.

1. Covetousness exposeth us to God's abhorrency, Pf. x. 3. 'The covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.' A king abhors to see his statue abused : God abhors to see a man made in his image should have the heart of a beast given to him. Who would live in such a sin as makes him abhorred of God? Whom God abhors he curseth, and God's curse blasts wherever it comes.

2. Covetousness precipitates men to ruin : it shuts them out of heaven, Eph. v. 5. 'This ye know, that no covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God.' What should a covetous man do in hea-

ven ? God can no more converse with him, than a king can converse with a swine, 1 Tim. vi. 9. ‘ They that will be rich fall into a snare, and many hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition.’ A covetous man is like a bee, that gets into a barrel of honey, and there drowns itself : he is like a ferryman, that takes in so many passengers to increase his fare, that he sinks his boat ; so a covetous man takes in more gold, to the increasing of his estate, that he damns himself in perdition. I have read of some inhabitants near Athens, who lived in a very dry, barren island, and they took much pains to draw a river to this island, to water it and make it fruitful ; but when they had opened the passages, and brought the river to it, the water broke in with such a force, that it drowned the land, and all the people in it : an emblem of a covetous man ; he labours to draw riches to him, and at last they come in in such an abundance, that they drown him in hell and perdition. How many, to build up an estate, pull down their souls ? Oh, therefore, flee from covetousness. I shall next prescribe some remedies against covetousness.

EXOD. xx. 17. *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, &c.*

I AM, in the next place, to resolve a question, “ How we may do to cure this itch of covetousness ? ”

*Ans.* For answer to this, I shall prescribe some remedies and antidotes against this sin.

1. Faith, 1 John v. 4. ‘ This is the victory over the world, even your faith.’ The root of covetousness is, the distrust of God’s providence : faith believes God will provide ; God who feeds the birds, will feed his children ; he who clothes the lilies, will clothe his lambs ; and so faith overcomes the world. Faith is the cure of care : Faith not only purifies the heart but satisfies the heart : Faith makes God our portion, and so in him we have enough, Psal. xvi. 5. ‘ The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places ; yea, I have a goodly heritage.’ Faith, by a divine chymistry, extracts his chief comfort out of God. A little with God is sweet. Thus faith is a remedy against covetousness ; faith overcomes not only the fear of the world, but the love of the world.

2. The second remedy is, judicious consideration.

(1.) What poor things these things below are, that we should covet them. 1. They are below the worth of the soul, which carries in it an idea, and resemblance of God. The world is but the workmanship of God, the soul is the image of God. 2.



You covet that which will not satisfy you, Eccl. v. 10. 'He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver.' Solomon had put all the creatures in a limbec, and filled out the quintessence, and behold, 'All was vanity,' Eccl. ii. 11. Covetousness is a dry dropfy: the more a man hath, the more he thirsts.

*Quo plus sunt potæ, plus sitiuntur acque.*

3. Worldly things cannot remove trouble of mind. King Saul being perplexed in conscience, all his crown jewels could not administer comfort to him, 1 Sam. xxviii. 15. The things of the world will no more ease a troubled spirit, than a gold cap will cure the head-ach. 4. The things of the world, if you had more of them, cannot continue with you. The creature hath a little honey in its mouth, but it hath wings to fly away. These things either go from us, or we from them: what poor things are these to covet?

(2.) Second consideration, the frame and contexture of the body: God hath made the face to look upwards towards heaven.

*Os homini sublime dedit, cælumque tueri Jussit.*—Ovid.

Anatomists observe, that whereas other creatures have but four muscles to their eyes, man hath a fifth muscle, by which he is able to look up to heaven; and as for the heart, it is made like a glass-vial, narrow and contracted downwards, but wide and broad upwards. And as the frame and contexture of the body teacheth us to look to things above, so especially the soul is planted in the body, as a divine sparkle to ascend upwards. Can it be imagined that God gave us intellectual, immortal souls, to covet only earthly things? What wise man would fish for gudgeons with golden hooks? Did God give us glorious souls, only to fish for the world? Sure our souls are made for an higher end; to aspire after the enjoyment of God in glory.

(3.) Third consideration, the examples of those who have been contemners and despisers of the world. The primitive Christians, as Clemens Alexandrinus observes, were sequestered from the world, and were wholly taken up in converse with God: they lived in the world above the world; like the birds of paradise, who soar above in the air, and seldom or never touch with their feet upon the earth. Luther saith, that he was never tempted to this sin of covetousness. The saints of old, though they did live in the world, they did trade in heaven, Phil. iii. 20. 'Our conversation is in heaven:' the Greek word signifies, our commerce, or traffic, or burgership, is in heaven. 'Enoch walked with God,' Gen. v. 24. His affections were sublimated, he did take a turn in heaven every day. The righteous are compared to a palm-tree, Psal. xcii. 12. Philo

observes, that whereas all other trees have their sap in their root, the sap of the palm-tree is towards the top; the emblem of the saints, whose hearts are above in heaven, where their treasure is.

3. The third remedy, covet spiritual things more, and you will covet earthly things less. Covet grace: grace is the best blessing, it is the seed of God, 1 John iii. 9. the angels' glory. Covet heaven; heaven is the region of happiness, it is the most pleasant climate. Did we covet heaven more, we should covet earth less. They that stand on the top of the Alps, the great cities of Campania seem but as small villages in their eyes: if we could have our hearts, more fixed upon the Jerusalem above, how would all worldly things disappear, and be as nothing in our eye; we read of an angel coming down from heaven, who did tread with his right foot on the sea and with his left foot on the earth, Rev. x. 2. had we but once been in heaven, and viewed the superlative glory of it, how might we, in an holy scorn, trample with one foot upon the earth, and with the other foot upon the sea! Oh covet after heavenly things! there is the tree of life, the mountains of spices, the rivers of pleasure, the honey-comb of God's love dropping, the delights of angels, the flower of joy fully ripe and blown. There is the pure air to breathe in; no fogs nor vapours of sin arise to infect that air; but the Sun of righteousness enlightens that horizon continually with his glorious beams. O let your thoughts and delights be always taken up about the city of pearl, the paradise of God. Did we covet heavenly things more, we should covet earthly things less. It is reported that after Lazarus was raised from the grave, he was never seen to smile or be delighted with the world after: were our hearts raised by the power of the Holy Ghost up to heaven, we should not be much taken with earthly things.

4. The fourth remedy, pray for an heavenly mind. Lord, let the loadstone of thy spirit, draw my heart upward: Lord, dig thy earth out of my heart; teach me how to possess the world, and not love it; how to hold it in my hand, and not let it get into my heart. So much for the commandment in general, 'Thou shalt not covet.'

(2.) I shall speak of it more particularly: 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife,' &c. Observe here the holiness and perfection of God's law: It forbids the *motus primo primi*, the first motions and risings of sin in the heart; 'Thou shalt not covet.' The laws of men take hold of the actions, but the law of God goes further, it forbids not only the actions, but the affections; 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house.' It is not said, thou shalt not take away his house; but 'Thou shalt not covet it.'

These lustings and desires after the forbidden fruit are sinful, Rom. vii. 7. 'The law hath said, Thou shalt not covet.' Though the tree bears no bad fruit, it may be faulty at the root; though a man doth not commit any gross sin, yet who can say his heart is pure? There may be a faultiness at the root, there may be sinful covetings and lustings in the soul.

*Use.* Let us be humbled for the sin of our nature, the risings of evil thoughts, coveting that which we ought not. Our nature is a seed-plot of iniquity, it is like charcoal that is ever sparkling: the sparkles of pride, envy, covetousness, arise in the mind. How should this humble us? If there be not sinful actings, there are sinful covetings. Let us pray for mortifying grace, which may be like the water of jealousy, to make the thigh of sin to rot. But to come to the words more clearly, 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, nor thy neighbour's wife, &c.

*Qu.* *Why is the house put before the wife? In Deuteronomy the wife is put first, Deut. v. 21. 'Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house.' Here the house is put first.*

*Ans.* In Deuteronomy, the wife is set down first, in respect of her value. She (if a good wife) is of far greater value and estimate than the house, Prov. xxxi. 10. 'Her price is far above rubies.' She is the furniture of the house, and this furniture is more worth than the house. When Alexander had overcome king Darius in battle, Darius seemed not to be much dismayed; but when he heard his wife was taken prisoner, now his eyes, like spouts, did gush forth water, as valuing his wife dearer than his life. But yet in this place in Exodus, the house is put before the wife: the reason is, because the house is first in order; the house is erected before the wife can live in it; the nest is built before the bird is in it: the wife is first esteemed, but the house must be first provided.

1. Then, 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house.' How depraved is man since the fall! Man knows not how to keep within bounds, but is coveting more than his own. Ahab, one would think had enough; he was a king, and one would suppose his crown-revenues should have contented him; but still he was coveting more: Naboth's vineyard was in his eye, and stood near the smoke of his chimney, and he could not be quiet till he had it in possession. Were there not so much coveting, there would not be so much bribing: one man pulls away another's house from him. It is only the prisoner lives in such a tenement as he may be sure none will go about to take from him.

2. 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.' This commandment is a bridle to check the inordinancy of brutish lusts;



‘Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife.’ It was the devil that ‘sowed another man’s ground,’ Mat. xiii. 25. But how is the hedge of this commandment trodden down in our times! there be many who do more than covet their neighbour’s wives, they take them, Deut. xxvii. 20. ‘Curfed be he that lieth with his father’s wife, and all the people shall say Amen.’ If it were to be proclaimed, ‘Curfed be he that lies with his neighbour’s wife,’ and all that were guilty should say Amen, how many would curse themselves!

3. ‘Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s man-servant, nor his maid-servant.’ Servants, when faithful are a treasure. What a true and trusty servant had Abraham! he was his right-hand: how prudent and faithful was he in the matter he was entrusted with, in getting a wife for his master’s son? Gen. xxiv. 9. And surely it would have gone near to Abraham, to have had any one entice away his servant from him. But this sin of coveting servants is common: if one hath a better servant, others will be inveigling and laying baits for him, and endeavour to draw him away from his master. This is a sin against the tenth commandment. To steal away another’s servant by enticement, is no better than thievery.

4. ‘Nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.’ Were there not coveting of ox and ass, there would not be so much stealing: first, men break the tenth commandment by coveting, and then they break the eighth commandment by stealing. It was an excellent appeal that Samuel made to the people, 1 Sam. xii. 3. ‘Witness against me before the Lord, whose ox have I taken, or whose ass, or whom have I defrauded.’ And it was a brave speech of St. Paul, Acts xx. 33. ‘I have coveted no man’s gold, or silver, or apparel.’

*Qu. But what means may we use, to keep us from coveting that which is our neighbour’s?*

*Ans.* The best remedy is contentation. If we are content with our own, we shall not covet that which is another’s. St. Paul could say, ‘I have coveted no man’s gold or silver:’ whence was this? It was from contentment, Phil. iv. 11. ‘I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.’ Content saith, as Jacob, Gen. xxiii. 3. ‘I have enough:’ I have a promise of heaven, and have sufficient to bear my charges thither; I have enough. And he who hath enough, will not covet that which is another’s. Be content; and the best way to be contented, is, (1.) Believe that condition best which God carves out to you by his providence. If God had seen it fit for us to have more, we would have had it; but his wisdom sees this best for us. Perhaps we could not manage a great estate; it is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and a full estate without sinning. Great estates may be snares; a boat may be

overturned by having too great a fall. The believing that estate best God carves for us, makes us content; and being contented, we will not covet that which is another's.

(2.) The way to be content with such things as we have, and not to covet another's, is to consider, the less estate we have, the less account we shall have to give at the last day. Every person is a steward, and must be accountable to God. They who have great estates have the greater reckoning: God will say, what good have you done with your estates? have you honoured me with your substance? Where are the poor you have fed and clothed; if you cannot give a good account it will be sad. This may make us contented with a less portion, to consider, the less estate, the less account we have to give; the less riches, the less reckoning. This is the way to have contentment, and no better antidote against coveting that which is another's than being content with that which is our own.

So much for the Commandments.

## MAN'S INABILITY TO KEEP THE MORAL LAW.

Q. LXXXII. *IS any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?*

*Ans.* No mere man, since the fall, is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.

JAM. iii. 2. 'In many things we offend all.' Man in his primitive state of innocency, was endowed with ability to keep the whole moral law: Adam had rectitude of mind, sanctity of will, perfection of power: Adam had the copy of God's law written on his heart; no sooner did God command, but he did obey: as the key is suited to all the wards in the lock, and can open them; so Adam had a power suited to all God's commands, and could obey them. Adam's obedience did exactly run parallel with the moral law, as a well made dial goes exactly with the sun. Man in innocence was like a well tuned organ, he did sweetly tune to the will of God: he was adorned with holiness as the angels, but not confirmed in holiness as the angels: Adam was holy but mutable; he fell from his purity, and we with him. Sin cut the lock of original righteousness, where our strength lay; sin hath brought such a languor and faintness into our souls, and hath so weakened us, that we shall never recover our full strength till we put on immortality. The thing I am now to demonstrate, is, that we cannot yield perfect obedience to the moral law. 'In many things we offend all.'

1. The case of an unregenerate man is such, that he cannot perfectly obey all God's commands: he may as well touch the stars, or span the ocean, as yield exact obedience to the law. A person unregenerate cannot act spiritually, he cannot pray in the Holy Ghost, he cannot live by faith, he cannot do duty out of love to duty; and if he cannot do duty spiritually, then much less perfectly. Now, that a natural man cannot yield perfect obedience to the moral law, is evident; (1.) Because he is spiritually dead, Eph. ii. 1. And being so, how can he keep the commandments of God perfectly? A dead man is not fit for action. A sinner hath the symptoms of death upon him; 2. He hath no sense; a dead man hath no sense: he hath no sense of the evil of sin, of God's holiness and veracity; therefore he is said to be without feeling, Eph. iv. 19. 2. He hath no strength, Rom. v. 6. What strength hath a dead man? A natural man hath no strength to deny himself, to resist temptation; he is dead: and can a dead man fulfil the moral law? (2.) A natural man cannot perfectly keep all God's commandments, because he is so interlarded with sin, he is 'born in sin,' Psal. li. 5. Job xv. 16. 'He drinks iniquity as water.' All the imaginations of his thoughts are evil, and only evil, Gen. vi. 4. Now the least evil thought is a breach of the royal law; and, if there be defection, there cannot be perfection. And, as a natural man hath no power to keep the moral law, so he hath no will. He is not only dead, but worse than dead; a dead man doth no hurt, but there is a life of resistance against God goes along with the death of sin? a natural man not only cannot keep the law through weakness, but he breaks it through wilfulness, Jer. xlv. 17. 'We will do whatsoever goeth out of our mouth to burn incense to the queen of heaven.'

2. As the unregenerate cannot keep the moral law perfectly, so neither the regenerate, Eccl. vii. 20. 'There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not;' nay, that 'sins not in doing good.' There is that in the best actions of a righteous man that is damnable, if God should weigh him in the ballance of justice. Alas! how are his duties fly-blown? He cannot pray without wandering, nor believe without doubting, Rom. vii. 18. 'To me to will is present, but how to perform I find not.' In the Greek it is, "How to do it thoroughly I find not." Paul though a saint of the first magnitude, was better at willing than at performing. Mary asked where they had laid Christ: she had a mind to have carried him away, but she wanted strength: so the regenerate have a will to obey God's law perfectly, but they want strength; their obedience is weak, and sickly: the mark they are to shoot at, is perfection of holiness, though they take a right aim, yet do what they can, they shoot short, Rom. vii. 19. "The good which I would, I do



not.' A Christian, while he is serving God, is hindered : like a ferryman, that plies the oar, and rows hard, but a gust of wind carries him back again : so saith Paul, ' The good I would, I do not ; ' I am driven back by temptation. Now, if there be any failure in our obedience, we cannot make a perfect commentary upon God's law : no Christian alive can write a copy of holiness without blotting. The virgin Mary's obedience was not perfect, she needed Christ's blood to wash her tears. Aaron was to make atonement for the altar, *Exod. xxix. 37.* to shew that the most holy offering hath defilement in it, and needs atonement to be made for it.

*Qu. 1. But if a man hath no power to keep the whole moral law, then why doth God require that of a man, which he is not able to perform ? How doth this stand with his justice ?*

*Ans.* Though man hath lost his power of obeying, God hath not lost his right of commanding. If a master intrusts a servant with money to lay out, and the servant spends it dissolutely, may not the master justly demand this money ? God gave us a power to keep the moral law ; we, by tampering with sin lost it : But may not God still call for perfect obedience ? or, in case of a fault, justly punish us ?

*Qu. 2. But why doth God suffer such an impotency to lie upon man that he cannot perfectly keep the law ?*

*Ans.* The Lord doth it, (1.) To humble us. Man is a self-exalting creature : and, if he hath but any thing of worth, he is ready to be puffed up : but when he comes to see his deficiencies and failings, and how far short he comes of the holiness and perfection God's law requires, this is a means to pull down his plumes of pride, and lay them in the dust : he weeps over his impotency, he blusheth over his leprous spots : he saith, as Job, ' I abhor myself in dust and ashes.' (2.) God lets this impotency and infirmness lie upon us, that we may have recourse to Christ, to obtain pardon for our defects, and to sprinkle our best duties with his blood. When a man sees himself indebted, he owes perfect obedience to the law, but he hath nothing to pay : this makes him flee to Christ to be his friend, and answer all the demands and challenges of the law and set him free in the court of justice.

*Use 1.* Is matter of humiliation for our fall in Adam. In the state of innocency we were perfectly holy ; our minds were crowned with knowledge, and our wills, as a queen, did sway the sceptre of liberty : but now we may say, as *Lam. v. 16.* ' The crown is fallen from our head.' We have lost that power which was inherent in us. When we look back to our primitive glory, when we shone as earthly angels, we may take up Job's words, chap. *xxix. 2.* ' O that it were with us as in months past ! ' O that it were with us as at first, when there

was no stain upon our virgin-nature, when there was a perfect harmony between God's law and man's will ! but, alas ! how the scene is altered, our strength is gone from us, we tread awry every step ; we come below every precept ; our dwarfishness will not reach the sublimity of God's law ; we fail in our obedience ; and while we fail, we forfeit. This may put us in close mourning, and spring a leak of sorrow in all our souls.

*Use II. Of confutation. Branch 1.* It confutes the Arminians, who cry up the power of the will : they hold, they have a will to save themselves. But by nature, we not only want strength, Rom. v. 6. but we want will to that which is good. The will is not full of impotency, but obstinacy, Ps. lxxxii. 11. 'Israel would none of me.' The will hangs forth a flag of defiance against God. Such as speak of the sovereign power of the will, forget Phil. ii. 13. 'It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do.' If the power be in the will of man, then what needs God work in us to will ? If the air can enlighten itself, what needs the sun to shine ? Such as talk of the power of nature, and the ability they have to save themselves, they disparage Christ's merits. I may say, as Gal. v. 4. 'Christ has become of no effect to them.' This I affirm, such as advance the power of their will in matters of salvation, without the medicinal grace of Christ, do absolutely put themselves under the covenant of works. And now I would ask them, 'Can they perfectly keep the moral law ?' *malum oritur ex quolibet defectu.* If there be but the least defect in their obedience, they are gone : for one sinful thought the law of God curseth them, and the justice of God arraigns them. Confounded be their pride, who cry up the power of nature, as if, by their own inherent abilities, they could rear up a building, the top whereof should reach to heaven.

*Branch 2.* It confutes a sort of people that brag of perfection ; and according to that principle, they can keep all God's commandments perfectly. I would ask these, have they at no time a vain thought come into their mind ? If they have, then they are not perfect. The virgin Mary was not perfect ; tho' her womb was pure (being overshadowed with the Holy Ghost) yet her soul was not perfect ; Christ doth tacitly imply a failing in her, Luke ii. 49. And, are they more perfect than the blessed virgin was ? Such as hold perfection, need not confess sin. David confessed sin, Ps. xxxii. 6. and Paul confessed sin, Rom. vii. 24. But they are got beyond David and Paul ; they are perfect, they never transgress : and where there is no transgression, what needs confession ?

*2dly,* If they are perfect, they need not ask pardon : they can pay God's justice what they owe ; therefore, what need they pray, 'Forgive us our debt ?' Oh that the devil should rock

men so fast asleep, as to make them dream of perfection! and whereas they bring that, Phil. iii. 15. 'Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded.' *Ans.* Perfection there, is meant of sincerity. God is best able to interpret his own word. He calls sincerity perfection, Job i. 8. 'A perfect and an upright man.' But who is exactly perfect? A man full of diseases may as well say he is healthful, as a man full of sin say, he is perfect.

*Use III.* To regenerate persons. Though you fail in your obedience, and cannot keep the moral law exactly, yet be not discouraged.

*Qu.* What comfort may be given to a regenerate person under the failures and imperfections of his obedience?

*Ans.* 1. That a believer is not under the covenant of works but under the covenant of grace. The covenant of works, requires perfect, personal, perpetual obedience: but in the covenant of grace, God will make some abatements: he will accept of less than he required in the covenant of works.

(1.) In the covenant of works God required perfection of degrees; in the covenant of grace, he accepts perfection of parts: there he required perfect working, here he accepts sincere believing: in the covenant of works God required us to live without sin; in the covenant of grace, God accepts of our combat with sin.

(2.) Though a Christian cannot, in his own person, perform all God's commandments; yet Christ, as his surety, and in his stead, hath fulfilled the law for him; and God accepts of Christ's obedience, which is perfect, to satisfy for that obedience which is imperfect. Christ being made a curse for believers, all the curses of the law have their sting pulled out.

(3.) Though a Christian cannot keep the commands of God to satisfaction, yet he may to approbation.

*Qu.* How is that?

*Ans.* 1. He gives his full assent and consent to the law of God, Rom. vii. 12. 'The law is holy and just: there was assent in the judgment, Rom. vii. 16. 'I consent to the law:' there was consent in the will.

2. A Christian mourns that he cannot keep the commandments fully: when he fails, he weeps: he is not angry with the law, because it is so strict; but he is angry with himself, because he is so deficient.

3. He takes a sweet complacential delight in the law, Rom. vii. 22. 'I delight in the law of God in the inward man.' Gr. [*Synedomai,*] "I take pleasure in it." Psalm cxix. 97. 'O how love I thy law!' Though a Christian cannot keep God's law, yet he loves his law; though he cannot serve God perfectly, yet he serves him willingly.



4. It is his cordial desire to walk in all God's commands, Pf. cxix. 5. 'O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes?' Though his strength fails, yet his pulse beats.

5. He doth really endeavour to obey God's law perfectly : and wherein he comes short he runs to Christ's blood to make supply for his defects. This cordial desire, and real endeavour, God esteems as perfect obedience, 2 Cor. viii. 12. 'If there be a willing mind, it is accepted.' 'Let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice,' Cant. ii. 14. 'Though the prayers of the righteous are mixed with sin, yet God sees they would pray better : God picks out the weeds from the flowers ; he sees the faith and winks at the failing. The saint's obedience, though he falls short of legal perfection, yet having sincerity in it, and Christ's merits mixed with it, finds gracious acceptance. When the Lord sees endeavours after perfect obedience, this he takes well at our hands : as a father that receives a letter from his child, though there be blots in the letter, and false spellings, yet the father takes all in good part : O what blottings are there in our holy things ! but God is pleased to take all in good part : faith God, it is my child, and he would do better if he could ; I will accept it.'



## ALL SINS NOT EQUALLY HEINOUS.

Q. LXXXIII. *ARE all transgressions of the law equally heinous ?*

Ans'. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

John xix. 11. 'He that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.' The Stoic philosophers held, that all sins were equal : but this scripture clearly holds forth, that there is a gradual difference in sin ; some are greater than others ; some are 'mighty sins,' Amos v. 12. and 'crying sins,' Gen. xviii. 21. Every sin hath a voice to speak, but some sins cry. As some diseases are worse than others, and some poisons more venomous ; so some sins are more heinous, Ezek. xvi. 47. Jer. xvi. 12. 'You have done worse than your fathers, your sins have exceeded theirs.' Some sins have a blacker aspect than others : to clip the king's coin is treason, but to strike his person is a higher degree of treason. A vain thought is a sin, but a blasphemous word is a greater sin. That some sins are greater than others, appears, (1.) Because there was difference in the offerings under the law ; the sin offering was greater than the trespass offerings. (2.) Because some sins are not capable of pardon as others are, therefore they must needs be more heinous, as

the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, Mat. xii. 31. (3.) Because some sins have a greater degree of punishment than others, Mat. xxiii. 14, 24. 'Ye shall receive greater damnation.' 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' God would not punish one more than another, but that his sin is greater. It is true, "all sins are equally heinous in respect of the object," or the person against whom sin is committed, viz. the infinite God: but in another sense, all sins are not alike heinous; some sins have more bloody circumstances in them, which are like the dye to the wool, to give it a deeper colour.

Qu. *What sins may be said to be more heinous than others?*

Ans. 1. Such sins as are committed without any occasion offered: a man swears or is angry, and hath no provocation. The less the occasion of sin is, the greater is the sin. 2. Such sins are more heinous, that are committed presumptuously. Under the law there was no sacrifice for presumptuous sins, Numb. xv.

Qu. *What is it to sin presumptuously, which doth heighten and aggravate sin, and make it more heinous?*

Ans. To sin presumptuously, is to sin against convictions and illuminations, or an enlightened conscience, Job xxiv. 13 'They are of those that rebel against the light.' Conscience, like the cherubim, stands with a flaming sword in its hand, to deter the sinner; yet he will sin. Did not Pilate sin against conviction, and with an high hand, in condemning Christ? He knew that of envy the Jews had delivered him, Matt. xxvii. 18. he confessed 'he found no fault with him,' Luke xxiii. 14. and his own wife sent to him, saying, 'have nothing to do with that just man,' Matt. xxvii. 19. Yet for all this, he gave the sentence of death against Christ. Here he sinned presumptuously, against an enlightened conscience. To sin ignorantly, doth something extenuate and pare off the guilt, John xv. 22. 'If I had not come, ye had had no sin;' that is, your sin had been less; but to sin against illuminations and convictions, doth enhance and accent men's sins. These sins make deep wounds in the soul; other sins fetch blood, these are a stab at the heart.

Qu. *How many ways doth a man sin against illuminations and convictions?*

Ans. 1. When he lives in the total neglect of duty. He is not ignorant that it is a duty to read the word, yet he lets the Bible lie by as rusty armour, that he seldom makes use of; he is convinced that it is a duty to pray in his family, yet he can go days and months, and God never hear of him; he calls God father but never asks his blessing. Neglect of family-prayer doth, as it were, uncover the roof of men's houses, and make way for a curse to be rained down upon their table.

2. When a man lives in the same sins he condemns in others, Rom. ii. 2. 'Thou that judgest another, dost the same thing.' As Austin saith of Seneca, "He wrote against superstitions, yet he worshipped those images which he reproveth." One man condemns another for rash censuring, yet lives in the same sin himself; a master reproves his apprentice for swearing, yet he himself swears. The snuffers of the tabernacle were of pure gold: they who reprove and snuff the vices of others, had need themselves to be free from those sins. The snuffers must be of gold.

3. When a man sins after vows, Ps. lvi. 12. 'Thy vows, O God, are upon me.' A vow is a religious promise made to God, to dedicate ourselves to him. A vow is not only a purpose, but a promise. Every votary makes himself a debtor, he binds himself to God in a solemn manner. Now to sin after a vow, to vow himself to God, and give his soul to the devil, must needs be against the highest convictions.

4. When a man sins after counsels, admonitions, warnings, he cannot plead ignorance: the trumpet of the gospel hath been blown in his ears, and sounded a retreat to call him off from his sins; he hath been told of his injustice, living in malice, keeping bad company, yet he would venture upon sin: this is to sin against conviction, it aggravates the sin, and is like a weight put into the scale, to make his sin weigh the heavier. If a sea mark be set up to give warning, that there are shelves and rocks in that place, yet, if the mariner will sail there, and split his ship, it is presumption; and, if he be cast away, who will pity him?

5. When a man sins against express comminations and threatenings. God hath thundered out threatenings against such sins, Ps. lxvi. 21. 'God shall wound the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses.' Yet, though God set the point of his sword to the breast of a sinner, yet he will commit sin. The pleasure of sin doth more delight him, than the threatenings affright him: he, like the 'leviathan, laughs at the shaking of a spear,' Job xli. 29. Nay, he derides God's threatenings, Isa. v. 19. 'Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it:' we have heard much what God intends to do, and of judgment approaching, we would fain see it. For men to see the flaming sword of God's threatenings brandished, yet to strengthen themselves in sin, is in an high manner to sin against illumination and conviction.

6. When a man sins under affliction. God doth not only thunder by threatening, but hath let his thunder-bolt fall: he hath inflicted judgments on a person; he may read his sin in his punishment, yet he sins. His sin was uncleanness: he hath wasted his strength as well as his estate. He hath had a fit of apoplexy; yet, though he feels the smart of sin, he retains the love of sin. This is to sin against conviction, 2 Chron. xxviii.



22. 'In his distress did he trespass yet more; this is that king Ahaz.' This doth enhance and make the sin greater than other sins: for sinning against an enlightened conscience: (1.) Is full of obstinacy and pertinaciousness; men give no reason, make no defence for their sins, yet they are resolved to hold fast iniquity. This is desperate wilfulness; and, *Voluntas est regula et mensura actionis*, the more of the will in a sin, the greater the sin, Jer. xviii. 12. 'We will walk after our own devices.' Though there be death and hell every step, we will march on under Satan's colours. This made the sin of the apostate angels so great, because it was wilful; they had no ignorance in their mind, no passion to stir them up; there was no tempter to deceive them, but they sinned obstinately and out of choice. (2.) To sin against convictions and illuminations, is joined with slighting and contempt of God. It is bad for a sinner to forget God, but it is worse to condemn him, Prov. x. 13. 'Wherefore do the wicked condemn God?' An enlightened sinner knows, that by his sin he disobligeth and angers God; but he cares not whether God be pleased or not, he will have his sin: therefore such an one is said to reproach God, Numb. xv. 30. 'The soul that doth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord.' Every sin displeaseth God, but sins against an enlightened conscience reproach the Lord. To condemn the authority of a prince, is a reproach done to him. (3.) It is accompanied with impudency. Fear and shame are banished, the veil of modesty is laid aside, Zeph. iii. 5. 'The unjust knoweth no shame.' Judas knew Christ was the Messiah; he was convinced of it by an oracle from heaven, and by the miracles he wrought, and yet he impudently goes on in his treason; nay, when Christ said, 'He that dips his hand with me in the dish, he shall betray me:' and Judas knew Christ meant him. And when Judas was going about his treason, Christ pronounced a woe to him, Luke xxii. 22. yet, for all that, he proceeded in his treason. Thus to sin presumptuously, against an enlightened conscience, dyes the sin of a crimson colour, and makes it greater than other sins.

3. Such sins are more heinous than others, which are sins of continuance. The continuing of sin is the enhancing of sin. He who plots treason, makes himself a greater offender. Some men's heads are the devil's mint-house, they are minting of mischief, Rom. i. 30. 'Inventors of evil things.' Some invent new oaths, others new snares; such were those presidents that invented a decree against Daniel, and got the king to sign it, Dan. vi. 9.

4. Those sins are greater which proceed from a spirit of malignity. To malign holiness is diabolical. It is a sin to want grace, it is worse to hate it. In nature there are antipathies,

as between the vine and laurel: Some have antipathy against God because of his purity, Isa. xxx. 11. 'Cause the holy One of Israel to cease from before us.' Sinners, if it lay in their power, would not only unthrone God, but unbe God; if they could help it, God should no longer be God. This sin is boiled up to a greater height.

5. Those sins are of a greater magnitude which are mixed with ingratitude. God cannot endure, of all things, to have his kindness slighted. God's mercy is seen, in reprieving men so long, in wooing them by his Spirit and ministers, to be reconciled, in crowning them with so many temporal blessings: now, to abuse all this love, when God hath been filling up the measure of his mercy, that men should fill up the measure of their sins: this is high ingratitude, and doth make their sins of a deeper crimson. Some are worse for mercy. The Vulture (saith Aelian) draws sickness from perfumes. So the sinner contracts evil from the sweet perfumes of God's mercy. The English chronicle reports of one Parry, who being condemned to die, queen Elizabeth sent him his pardon; and, after he was pardoned, he conspired and plotted the queen's death; just so some deal with God; he bestows mercy, and they plot treason against him, Isa i. 2. 'I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.' The Athenians, in lieu of the good service Themistocles had done them, banished him their city. The snake, in the fable, being frozen, stung him that gave it warmth. Certainly sins against mercy are far more heinous.

6. Those sins are more heinous than others, which are committed with delectation. A child of God may sin through a surprisal, or against his will, Rom. vii. 19. 'The evil which I would not, that do I.' Like one that is carried down the stream involuntarily. But, to sin with delight, doth heighten and greaten the sin; a sign the heart is in the sin, Hof. iv. 8. 'They set their heart on their iniquity,' as a man follows his gain with delight, Rev. xxii. 15. 'Without are dogs, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.' To tell a lie, is a sin; but to love to tell a lie is a greater sin.

7. Those sins are more heinous than others, which are committed under a pretence of religion. To cozen and defraud is a sin; but to do it with a Bible in one's hand, is a double sin; to be unchaste is a sin, but to put on a mask of religion to play the whore, makes the sin greater, Prov. vii. 14. 'I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows: come let us take our fill of love.' She speaks as if she had been at church, and had been saying her prayers: who would ever have suspected her of dishonesty? But, behold her hypocrisy; she makes her devotion a preface to adultery, Luke xx. 47. 'Who

devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers.' This sin was not in making long prayers; (for Christ was a whole night in prayer) but to make long prayers, that they might do unrighteous actions, did make their sin more horrid.

1. Sins of apostasy are more heinous than others. Demas forsook the truth, 2 Tim. iv. 10. and afterwards became a priest in an idol-temple, saith Dorotheus. To fall is a sin, but to fall away, is a greater sin. Apostates cast a disgrace upon religion. The apostate (saith Tertullian) seems to put God and Satan in the ballance, and, having weighed both their services, prefers the devil's service, and proclaims him to be the best master. In which respect, the apostate is said to put Christ to 'open shame,' Heb. vi. 6. This dyes a sin in grain, and makes it greater. It is a sin not to profess Christ, but it is a greater to deny him: not to wear Christ's colours is a sin; but to run from his colours, is a greater sin. A pagan sins less than a baptized renegado.

9. To persecute religion, makes sin greater, Acts vii. 22. 'To have no religion, is a sin: but to endeavour to destroy religion is a greater.' Antiochus Epiphanes took more tedious journies, and ran more hazards, to vex and oppose the Jews, than all his predecessors had done in obtaining victories. 'Herod added this above all, that he put John in prison,' Luke iii. 20. He sinned before by incest; but, by imprisoning the prophet, this added to his sin, and made it greater. Persecution fills up the measure of sin, Matth. xxiii. 32. 'Fill you up the measure of your fathers.' If you pour in a porringer of water into a cistern, that adds something to it; but pour in a bucket-full or two, and that fills up the measure of the cistern: so persecution fills up the measure of sin, and makes it greater.

10. To sin maliciously, makes sin greater. Aquinas and other of the schoolmen, place the sin against the Holy Ghost in malice. The sinner, doth all he can to vex God, and despite the Spirit of grace, Heb. x. 29. Thus Julian, who threw up his dagger in the air as if he would have been revenged upon God. This swells sin to its full bigness, it cannot be greater. When a man is once come to this, blasphemously to despite the Spirit, there is but one step lower he can fall, and that is to hell.

11. & ult. It aggravates sin, and makes it greater, when a man not only sins himself, but endeavours to make others sin. (1.) Such as teach errors to the people, who decry Christ's Deity, or deny his virtue, making him only a political head, not an head of influence; who preach against the morality of the sabbath, or the immortality of the soul: these men's sins are greater than others. If the breakers of God's law sin, what do they that teach men to break them? Matth. v. 19. (2.) Such as destroy others by their bad example. The swearing



father hath taught his son to swear, and damned him by his example. These men's sins are greater than others, and they shall have an hotter place in hell.

*Use.* You see all sins are not equal; some are more grievous than others, and bring greater wrath; therefore especially take heed of these sins, Psal. xix. 13. 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.' The least sin is bad enough; you need not aggravate your sins, and make them more heinous: He that hath a little wound will not make it deeper. O beware of these bloody circumstances which greaten your sin, and make it more heinous. The higher a man is in sinning, the lower he shall lie in torment.

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### WHAT SIN DESERVETH.

Q. LXXXV. *WHAT doth every sin deserve?*

*Ans.* God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.

Mat. xxv. 41. 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.'—

Man having sinned, is like a favourite turned out of the king's favour, and deserves the wrath and curse of God.

I. God's curse, Gal. iii. 10. As when Christ cursed the fig-tree, it withered, Mat. xxi. 19. So, when God curseth any, he withers in his soul. God's curse blasts whether it comes.

II. God's wrath, which is nothing else but the execution of God's curse.

*First,* What this wrath is? In this wrath there is, (1.) Something that is Privative; that is, the being deprived of the smiles of God's face. It is hell enough to be excluded from God's 'presence; in whose presence is fulness of joy,' Psal. xvi. 11. God's smiling face hath that splendor and oriency of beauty shining in it, as ravisheth the angels with delight. This is the diamond in the ring of glory. And, if it were such a mercy for Absalom, that he might not see the king's face, 2 Kings xiv. 22. what will it be for the wicked to be shut out from beholding God's pleasant face! *Privatio Divinae visionis omnium suppliciorum summum.*

(2.) God's wrath hath something in it Positive: That is, his frown and enraged fury; which is 'wrath come upon the sinner to the uttermost,' 1 Thess. ii. 16. Here three positions or maxims;

I. God's wrath is irresistible, Psalm xc. 11. 'Who knows the power of thine anger?' Sinners may oppose God's ways,

but not his wrath. Shall the briars contend with the fire? Shall finite contend with infinite? Job xl. 9. 'Hast thou an arm like God?'

2. God's wrath is *terrible*. The Spanish proverb is, *The lion is not so fierce as he is painted*. We are apt to have slight thoughts of God's wrath; but it is very tremendous and dismal, as if scalding lead should be dropt into one's eye. The Hebrew word for *wrath*, signifies *heat*. To shew that the wrath of God is hot, therefore it is compared to *fire* in the text: Fire, when it is in its rage, is dreadful (as we saw in the flames of this city). So the wrath of God is like fire, it is the terrible of terribles. Other fire is but painted to thus: If when God's wrath is kindled but a little, and a spark of it flies into a wicked man's conscience in this life, it is so terrible; what will it be when God "stirs up all his wrath?" Psal. lxxviii. 38. How sad is it with a soul in desertion! Now God dips his pen in gall, and 'writes bitter things;' now his poisoned arrow sticks fast in the heart, Psalm lxxxviii. 15, 16. 'While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted; thy fierce wrath goeth over me.' Luther, in desertion, was in such horror of mind, that *Nec calor, nec sanguis super esset*; he had no blood seen in his face, but he lay as one dead. Now, if God's wrath be such towards them whom he loves, what will it be towards them whom he hates? If they who sip of the cup find it so bitter, what will they do who drink the dregs of the cup? Psal. lxxv. 8. Solomon saith, "The wrath of a prince, is as the roaring of a lion," Prov. xix. 12. What then is God's wrath? When God musters up all his forces, and sets himself in battalia against a sinner, how can his heart endure? Ezek. xxii. 14. 'Who is able to lie under mountains of wrath?' God is the sweetest friend, but the sorest enemy. To set forth the fearfulness of this wrath.

(1.) The wrath of God shall seize upon every part of a sinner: 1. Upon the body: 'The body, which was so tender, it could not bear heat or cold, shall be tormented in the wine-press of God's wrath; those eyes, which before could behold amorous objects, shall be tormented with the sight of devils; the ears, which before were delighted with music, shall be tormented with the hideous shrieks of the damned. 2. The wrath of God shall seize upon the soul of a reprobate. Ordinary fire cannot touch the soul; when the martyrs' bodies were consuming, their souls did triumph in the flames; but God's wrath burns the soul. 1. The memory shall be tormented to remember what means of grace have been abused. 2. The conscience shall be tormented with self-accusations: 'The sinner shall accuse himself for presumptuous sins, for mis-spending his precious hours, for resisting the Holy Ghost.

(2.) The wrath of God is without intermission. Hell is an

abiding place, but no resting place; there's not a minute's rest. Outward pain hath some abatement; if it be the stone or cholic, the patient hath sometimes ease: But the torments of the damned have no intermission; he that feels God's wrath, never saith, 'I have ease.'

(3.) The wrath of God is eternal. So saith the text, 'Everlasting fire.' No tears can quench the flame of God's anger; no, though we could shed rivers of tears. In all pains of this life, men hope for a cessation, the suffering will not continue long; either the tormentor dies, or the tormented: But the wrath of God is always feeding upon a sinner. The terror of natural fire is, that it consumes what it burns: But this makes the fire of God's wrath terrible, that it doth not consume what it burns. *Sic morientur damnati ut semper vivant*, Bern. The sinner shall ever be in the furnace; after innumerable millions of years, the wrath of God is as far from ending, as it was at the beginning. If all the earth and sea were sand, and every thousand years a bird should come and take away one grain of this sand, it would be a long while ere that vast heap of sand were emptied; but if after all that time the damned might come out of hell, there were some hope: But this word *Ever* breaks the heart.

Qu. *But how doth it seem to consist with God's justice to punish sin (which perhaps was committed in a moment) with eternal fire?*

Ans. In respect of the heinous nature of sin. Consider the person offended; it is *Crimen Læstæ-majestatis*: Sin is committed against an infinite majesty; therefore the sin is infinite, and so the punishment must be infinite. Now, because the nature of man is but finite, and a sinner cannot at once bear infinite wrath, therefore he must in eternity of time be satisfying what he cannot satisfy at once.

(4.) While the wicked lie scorching in the flames of wrath, they have none to commiserate them. It is some ease of grief, to have some condole with us; but the wicked have wrath and no pity shewn them. Who should pity them? God will not pity them: They derided his Spirit, and now he will laugh at their calamity, Prov. i. 26. The saints will not pity them: They persecuted the saints upon earth, therefore they will rejoice to see God's justice executed on them, Psal. lviii. 10. 'The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance.'

(5.) The sinner under wrath hath none to speak a good word for him. An elect person when he sins, hath one to intercede for him, 1 John ii. 1. 'We have an advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous.' Christ will say, It is one of my friends, one for whom I have shed my blood; Father, pardon him. But the wicked (that die in sin) have none to solicit for them; they have



an accuser, but no advocate; Christ's blood will not plead for them; they slighted Christ, and refused to come under his government, therefore Christ's blood cries against them.

3. God's wrath is just. The Greek word for vengeance, signifies justice. The wicked shall drink a sea of wrath, but not one drop of injustice. 'Tis just God's honour be repaired, and how can that be but by punishing offenders? Having shewn you what this wrath of God is, I shall shew you, 2. That we have deserved the curse and wrath of God: he who infringeth the king's laws, deserves the penalty. Mercy goes by favour, punishment by desert, Dan. ix. 8. 'To us belongeth confusion of face. Wrath is that which belongeth to us as we are sinners; it is as due to us, as any wages that are paid.

*Use I.* Of information. *1st, Branch.* It justifies God in condemning sinners at the last day. Sinners deserve wrath, and it is no injustice to give them that which they deserve. If a malefactor deserves death, the judge doth him no wrong in condemning him.

*2d, Branch.* See what a great evil sin is, which exposeth a person to God's wrath for ever. You may know the lion by his paw: and you may know what an evil thing sin is, by the wrath and curse it brings. When you see a man drawn upon an hurdle to execution, you conclude he is guilty of some capital crime that brings such a punishment: when a man lies under the horrid zone of God's wrath, and roars out in flames; then say, How horrid an evil sin is! They who now see no evil in swearing, or sabbath-breaking, they will see it look black in the glafs of hell-torments.

*3d, Branch.* See here an hand-writing upon the wall; here is that which may check a sinner's mirth. He is brisk now and frolic, 'he chants to the sound of the viol, and invents instruments of music,' Amos vi. 5. He drinks 'stolen waters,' and saith, 'they are sweet.' Oh! but let him remember, that the wrath and curse of God hang over him, which will shortly (without repentance) be executed on him. Dionysius thought, as he sat at table, he saw a naked sword hang over his head: the sword of God's justice hangs over a sinner; and when the slender thread of life is cut asunder, the sword falls upon him. 'Rejoice, O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth,' Ecccl. xi. 9. 'But know thou for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.' For a drop of pleasure, thou must drink a sea of wrath. Your pleasure cannot be so sweet, as wrath is bitter: the delights of the flesh cannot countervail the horror of conscience: better want the devil's honey, than be so stung with the wrath of God. The garden of Eden, which signifies pleasure, had a flaming sword placed at the east end of it, Gen. iii. 24. The garden of carnal and

sinful delight is surrounded with the flaming sword of God's wrath.

*Use II. Reproof.* It reproves the stupidity of sinners, who are no more affected with the curse and wrath of God which is due to them, Isa. xlv. 19. 'no man considereth in his heart.' If they were in debt, and were ready to have the serjeant arrest them, they would be affected with that: but tho' the fierce wrath of God is ready to arrest them, they remember not. A beast, though he hath no shame, yet he hath fear; he is afraid of fire: but sinners are worse than brutish, they fear not the 'fire of hell,' till they are in it. Most have their conscience asleep, or seared; but when they shall see the vials of God's wrath dropping, then they will cry out, as Dives, 'O I am tormented in this flame!' Luke xvi. 24.

*Use III. Exhort.* 1. Let us adore God's patience, who hath not brought this wrath and curse upon us all this while. We have deserved wrath, yet God hath not given us our desert. We may all subscribe to that, Pl. ciii. 8. 'The Lord is slow to anger:' and ver. 10. 'He hath not rewarded us according to our iniquities.' God hath deferred his wrath, and given us space to repent, Rev. ii. 12. God is not like an hasty creditor, that requires the debt, and gives no time for the payment: he shoots off his warning-piece, that he may not shoot off his murdering-piece, 2 Pet. iii. 9. 'The Lord is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish.' God adjourns the assizes, to see if sinners would turn; he keeps off the storm of his wrath: but if men will not be warned, let them know, that long-forbearance is no forgiveness.

2d, *Branch.* Let us labour to prevent the wrath we have deserved. How careful are men to prevent poverty or disgrace? Oh labour to prevent God's eternal wrath, that it may not only be deferred, but removed.

*Qu. What shall we do to prevent and escape wrath to come?*

*Ans.* 1. By getting an interest in Jesus Christ. Christ is the only skreen to stand betwixt us and the wrath of God: he did feel God's wrath, that they who believe in him should never feel it, 1 Thess. i. 10. 'Jesus hath delivered us from the wrath to come.' Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace was a type of God's wrath, and that furnace did not singe the garments of the three children, 'nor was the smell of fire upon them,' Dan. iii. 27. Jesus Christ went into the furnace of his Father's wrath; and those that believe in him, the smell of the fire of hell shall never pass upon them.

2. If we would prevent the wrath of God, let us take heed of those sins which will bring the wrath of God. Edmund, successor of Anselm, had a saying, 'I had rather leap into a fur-

nace of fire, than willingly commit a sin against God." There are several fiery sins we must take heed of, which will bring the fire of God's wrath.

(1.) The fire of rash anger. Some who profess religion, yet cannot bridle their tongue; they care not what they say in their anger, they will curse their passions. St. James saith 'The tongue is set on fire of hell,' chap. iii. 6. O take heed of a 'fiery tongue,' lest it bring thee to 'fiery torment.' Dives begged a drop of water to cool his tongue: St. Cyprian saith, He had offended most in his tongue, and now that was most set on fire.

(2.) Take heed of the fire of malice. Malice is a malignant humour, whereby we wish evil to one another; it is a vermin lives on blood, it studies revenge. Caligula had a chest where he kept deadly poisons for them he had malice against. The fire of malice brings men to the fiery 'furnace of God's wrath.'

(3.) Take heed of the sin of uncleanness, Heb. xiii. 4. 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.' Such as burn in uncleanness, are in great danger to burn one day in hell. Let one fire put out another; let the fire of God's wrath put out the fire of lust.

*2d, Branch.* To you who have a well-grounded hope, that you shall not feel this wrath, which you have deserved; let me exhort you, 1. To be very thankful to God, who hath given his Son to save you from this tremendous wrath. 'Jesus hath delivered you from wrath to come.' The Lamb of God was scorched in the fire of God's wrath for you: Christ did feel the wrath which he did not deserve, that you may escape the wrath which you have deserved. Pliny observes, that there is nothing better to quench fire than blood: Christ's blood hath quenched the fire of God's wrath for you. 'Upon me, upon me be the curse,' said Rebekah to Jacob, Gen. xxvii. 13. So said Christ to God's justice, "Upon me be the curse, that my elect may inherit the blessing." 2. Be patient under all the afflictions which you endure. Affliction is sharp, but this is not wrath, this is not hell. Who would not willingly drink in the cup of affliction, that knows he shall never drink in the cup of damnation? who would not be willing to bear the wrath of men, that knows he shall never feel the wrath of God?

Christian, tho' thou mayest feel the rod, thou shalt never feel the bloody ax. Austin once said, "Strike, Lord, where thou wilt, if sin be pardoned." So say, Afflict me, Lord, as thou wilt in this life, seeing I shall escape wrath to come.



## OF FAITH.

Q. LXXXV. WHAT doth God require of us that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?

Ans. Faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means, whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

I begin with the first, 'Faith in Jesus Christ,' Rom. iii. 25. 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' The great privilege in the text is, to have Christ for a propitiation; which is not only to free us from God's wrath, but to ingratiate us into God's love and favour. And the means of having Christ to be our propitiation is, 'Faith in his blood.' There is a twofold faith, *Fides quæ creditur*, (i. e.) "The doctrine of faith;" and *Fides quæ creditur*, (i. e.) the "grace of faith." The act of justifying faith lies in recumbency: we do rest on Christ alone for salvation. As a man that is ready to drown, catcheth hold on the bough of a tree; so a poor trembling sinner, seeing himself ready to perish catcheth hold by faith on Christ the tree of life, and so is saved. The work of faith is by the holy Spirit; therefore faith is called the 'fruit of the Spirit,' Gal. v. 22. Faith doth not grow in nature, it is an outlandish plant, a fruit of the Spirit. This grace of faith is *sanctissimum humani pectoris benum*; of all others, the most precious rich faith, and most holy faith, and faith of God's select: hence it is called 'precious faith,' 2 Pet. i. 1. As gold is the most precious among the metals, so is faith among the graces. Faith is the queen of the graces; faith is the condition of the gospel; 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' Luke vii. 50. Not thy tears. Faith is the "vital artery of the soul," it animates it, Heb. ii. 4. 'The just shall live by faith.' Unbelievers, though they breathe, yet want life. Faith is (as Clemens Alexandrinus calls it) a mother grace: it excites and invigorates all the graces: not a grace stirs till faith sets it a-work. Faith sets repentance a-work; it is like fire to the still; faith sets hope a-work; first we believe the promise, then we hope for it: did not faith feed the lamp of hope with oil, it would soon die: faith sets love a-work, Gal. v. 6. 'Faith which worketh by love.' Who can believe in the infinite merits of Christ, and his heart not ascend in a fiery chariot of love? Faith is a catholicon, or remedy against all troubles, a sheet-anchor we cast out into the sea of God's mercy, and are kept from sinking in despair. Other graces have done worthily; thou, O Faith, ex-

cellest them all. Indeed in heaven love will be the chief grace : but, while we are here militant, love must give place to faith. Love takes possession of glory, but faith gives a title to it. Love is the crowning grace in heaven, but faith is the conquering grace upon earth, 1 John. v. 4. ‘ This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.’ Faith carries away the garland from all the other graces : other graces help to sanctify us, but it is faith only that hath the honour to justify, Rom. v. 1. ‘ Being justified by faith.’

Qu. *But how comes faith to be so precious ?*

Ans. Not as it is a more holy quality, or as if it had more worthiness than other graces, but *respectu objecti*, “ as it lays hold on Christ the blessed object,” and fetcheth in his fulness, John ix. 16. Faith in itself considered, is but *manus mendica*, “ the beggar’s hand :” but as this hand receives the rich alms of Christ’s merits, so it is precious, and doth challenge a superiority over the rest of the graces.

Use I. *Branch 1st.* Of all sins beware of the rock of unbelief, Heb. iii. 12. ‘ Take heed lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief.’ Men think, as long as they are not drunkards or swearers, it is no great matter to be unbelievers. This is the gospel-sin, it dyes your other sins in grain.

1. Unbelief is a Christ-reproaching sin. Unbelief disparageth Christ’s infinite merit as if it could not save : unbelief makes the wound of sin to be broader than the plaister of Christ’s blood. This is an high contempt offered to Christ and is a deeper spear than that which the Jews thrust into his side.

2. Unbelief is an ungrateful sin. *Ingratus vitandus est ut dirum scelus, tellus ipsa fœdius nihil creat.* Ingratitude is a prodigy of wickedness ; unbelief is ungrateful, being against the richest mercy. Suppose a king should redeem a captive, and to redeem him should part with his crown of gold from his head : and when he had done this, should say to the man redeemed, “ All I desire of thee in lieu of my kindness, is to believe that I love thee :” now, if he should say, “ No, I do not believe any such thing ; or that thou carest at all for me :” I appeal to you, were not this odious ingratitude ? So is this case here, God hath sent his Son to shed his blood : God requires only to believe in him, that he is able and willing to save us : No, saith unbelief, his blood was not shed for me, I cannot persuade myself that Christ hath any purpose of love to me : is not this horrid ingratitude ? And this enhanceth a sin, and makes it of a crimson colour.

3. Unbelief is a leading sin. It is the breeder of sin. *Qualitas malae vitae initium summit ab infidelitate.* Unbelief is a root-sin, and the devil labours to water this root, that the branches may be fruitful. (1.) Unbelief breeds hardness of heart ; therefore they are put together, Mark xvi. 14. Christ upbraideth

them with their unbelief and hardness of heart. Unbelief breeds the stone of the heart : he who believes not in Christ, is not affected with his sufferings, he melts not in tears of love. Unbelief freezeth the heart : first it defiles and hardens. (2.) Unbelief breeds profaneness : an unbeliever will stick at no sin ; neither at false weights, nor false oaths. He will swallow down treason ; Judas was first an unbeliever, and then a traitor, John vi. 64. He who hath no faith in his heart, will have no fear of God before his eyes.

4. Unbelief is a wrath procuring sin ; it is *inimica salutis*, Bern. John iii. 18. *Jam condemnatus est*, dying so, he is as sure to be condemned as if it were so already, John iii. 36. ‘ He that believeth not on the Son of God, the wrath of God abideth on him.’ He who believes not in the blood of the Lamb, must feel the wrath of the Lamb. The Gentiles that believe not in Christ, will be as well damned as the Jews who blaspheme him. And if unbelief be so fearful and damnable a sin, shall we not be afraid to live in it ?

2d, Branch. Above all graces, ‘ set faith a-work on Christ,’ John iii. 15. ‘ That whosoever believeth on him should not perish.’ Eph. vi. 16. ‘ Above all, take the shield of faith.’ Say as queen Esther, ‘ I will go in into the king ; and if I perish, I perish.’ She had nothing to encourage her, she ventured against law, yet the golden sceptre was held forth to her. We have promises to encourage our faith, John vi. 37 ‘ He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.’ Let us then advance faith by an holy recumbency on Christ’s merits. Christ’s blood will not justify without believing : they are both put together in the text, ‘ Faith in his blood.’ The blood of God, without faith in Christ will not save. Christ’s sufferings are the plaister to heal a sin-sick soul, but this plaister must be applied by faith. It is not money in a rich man’s hand, tho’ offered to us, will enrich us, unless we receive it. So it is not Christ’s virtues or benefits will do us good, unless we receive them by the hand of faith. Above all graces, set faith on work ; remember this grace is most acceptable to God, and that upon many accounts.

(1.) Because it is a God exalting grace : it glorifies God, Rom. iv. 20. ‘ Abraham being strong in faith, gave glory to God.’ To believe that there is more mercy in God, and merit in Christ, than sin in us, and that Christ hath answered all the demands and challenges of the law, and that his blood hath fully satisfied for us ; this is an high degree to honour God. Faith in the mediator brings more glory to God, than martyrdom, or the most heroic act of obedience.

(2.) Faith in Christ is so acceptable to God, because it is such a self-denying grace ; it makes a man go out of himself, re-



nounce all self-righteousness, and wholly rely on Christ for justification. Faith is very humble, it confesseth its own indigence, and lives wholly upon Christ. As the bee sucks sweetness from the flower, so faith sucks all its strength and comfort from Christ.

(3.) Faith is a grace so acceptable to God, because by faith we present a righteousness to God, which doth best please him : we bring the righteousness of Christ into the court, which is called the righteousness of God, 2 Cor. v. 21. To bring Christ's righteousness, is to bring Benjamin with us. A believer may say, Lord, it is not the righteousness of Adam, or of the angels but of Christ who is God-man, that I bring before thee. The Lord cannot choose but smell a sweet savour in Christ's righteousness.

*Uſe II. Trial.* Let us try our faith ; there is something that looks like faith, and is not. Pliny faith, there is Cyprian stone, which is in colour, like a diamond, but it is not of the right kind : there is a false spurious faith in the world. Some plants have the same leaf with others, but the Herbalist can distinguish them by the root and taste ; something may look like true faith, but it may be distinguished several ways.

(1.) *Trial.* True faith is grounded upon knowledge ; knowledge carries the torch before faith. There is a knowledge of Christ's orient excellencies, Phil. iii. 8. He is all made up of love and beauty. True faith is a judicious, intelligent grace, it knows whom it believes, and why it believes. Faith is seated as well in the understanding as the will : it hath an eye to see Christ, as well as a wing to fly to him. Such therefore as are invailed with ignorance, or have only an implicit faith, to believe as the Church believes, have no true genuine faith.

(2.) Faith lives in a broken heart, Mark ix. 24. ' He cried out with tears, Lord, I believe.' True faith is always in an heart bruised for sin : such therefore, whose hearts were never touched for sin, have no faith. If a physician should tell us, there were an herb would help us against all infections, but it always grows in a watery place : if we should see an herb like it in colour, leaf, smell, blossom, but it grows upon a rock we should conclude this were the wrong herb. So saving faith doth always grow in an heart humbled for sin ; it grows in a weeping eye, watery conscience : therefore, if there be a shew of faith, but it grows upon a rock, an hard impenitent heart, this is not the true faith.

(3.) True faith is at first nothing, but an Embryo, it is minute and small ; it is full of doubtings, temptations, fears : it begins in weakness. It is like the smoaking flax, Mat. xii. 20. It smokes with desires, but doth not flame with comfort ; it is at first so small, that it is scarce discernable. Such as, at the

first dash, have a strong persuasion that Christ is theirs, who leap out of sin into assurance, their faith is false and spurious : that faith, which is come to its full stature on its birth-day, is a monster. The seed that sprung up suddenly withered, Mat. xiii. 5.

(4.) Faith is a refining grace, it consecrates and purifies. Moral virtue may wash the outside, faith washeth the inside, Acts xv. 9. ‘ Having purified their hearts by faith,’ faith makes the heart a sacrary or temple with this inscription, ‘ holiness to the Lord,’ such, whose hearts have legions of lusts in them, were never acquainted with the true faith. For one to say he hath faith, yet live in sin ; is, as if one should say, he were in health, yet his vitals are perished. Faith is a virgin-grace, it is joined with sanctity, 1 Tim. iii. 9. ‘ Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.’ The jewel of faith is always put in the cabinet of a pure conscience. The woman that touched Christ by faith, fetched an healing and cleansing virtue from him.

(5.) True faith is obediential, Rom. xvi. 26. ‘ The obedience of faith.’ Faith melts our will into the will of God. If God commands duty (though cross to flesh and blood) faith obeys, Heb. xi. 8. ‘ By faith Abraham obeyed.’ Faith doth not only believe the promise, but obey the command. It is not having a speculative knowledge will evidence you to be believers : the devil hath knowledge ; but that which makes him a devil is, he wants obedience.

(6.) True faith is increasing, Rom. i. 17. ‘ From faith to faith,’ *i. e.* From one degree of faith to another. Faith doth not lie in the heart, as a stone in the earth ; but, as seed in the earth, it grows. Joseph of Arimathea was a disciple of Christ, but afraid to confess him ; afterwards he went boldly to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus, John xix. 36. And a Christian’s increase in faith is known two ways :

1. By steadfastness : he is a pillar in the temple of God, Col. ii. 7. ‘ Rooted and built up in him ; and established in the faith.’ Unbelievers are sceptics in religion, they are unsettled ; they question every truth : but, when faith is on the increasing hand, it doth *subilire animum*, it doth corroborate a Christian ; he is able to prove his principles ; he holds no more than he will die for : as that martyr-woman said, “ I cannot dispute for Christ, but I can burn for him.” An increasing faith is not like a ship in the midst of the sea, that fluctuates and is tossed upon the waves ; but like a ship at anchor which is firm and steadfast.

2. A Christian’s increase in faith is known by strength : he can do that now, which he could not do before. When one is man-grown, he can do that which he was not able to do when

he was a child ; he can carry an heavier burden ; so a Christian can bear crosses with more patience.

*Obj. But I fear I have no faith it is so weak ?*

*Ans.* If you have faith though but in its infancy, be not discouraged ; For, (1.) A little faith is faith, as a spark of fire is fire. (2.) A weak faith may lay hold on a strong Christ : a weak hand can tie the knot in marriage, as well as a strong. She, in the gospel, who but touched Christ, fetched virtue from him. (3.) 'The promises are not made to strong faith, but, to true. 'The promise doth not say, he who hath a giant faith, who can believe God's love through a frown, who can rejoice in affliction, who can work wonders, remove mountains, stop the mouth of lions, shall be saved ; but, whosoever believes, be his faith never so small. A reed is but weak especially when it is bruised ; yet the promise, is made to it, Mat. xii. 20. 'A bruised reed will he not break.' (4.) A weak faith may be fruitful. Weakest things multiply most. The vine is a weak plant, but it is fruitful. The thief's cross, which was newly converted, was but weak in grace ; but how many precious clusters grew upon that tender plant ! Luke xxiii. 40. he chides his fellow-thief, 'Dost thou not fear God ?' He judgeth himself, 'We indeed suffer justly.' He believes in Christ, when he said, 'Lord.' He makes a heavenly prayer, 'Remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom.' Weak Christians may have strong affections. How strong is the first love, which is after the first planting of faith ! (5.) The weakest believer is a member of Christ, as well as the strongest ; and the weakest member of the body mystically shall not perish. Christ will cut off rotten members, but not weak members. Therefore, Christian, be not discouraged : God, who would have us receive them that are weak in faith, Rom. xiv. 1. will not himself refuse them.

II. The second means whereby we escape the curse and wrath due to sin, is by repentance.

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## OF REPENTANCE.

*Acts xi. 18. Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life.*

REPENTANCE seems to be a bitter pill to take, but it is to purge out the bad humour of sin. Repentance is, by some Antinomian spirits, cried down as a legal doctrine ; but Christ himself preached it, Matth. iv. 17. 'From that time Jesus began to preach, and say, Repent,' &c. And, in his last farewell,



when he was ascending to heaven, he commanded that 'Repentance should be preached in his name,' Luke xxiv. 37. Repentance is a pure gospel grace. The covenant of works would not admit of repentance: it cursed all that could not perform perfect and personal obedience, Gal. iii. 10. Repentance comes in by the gospel; it is the fruit of Christ's purchase, that repenting sinners shall be saved. Repentance is wrought by the ministry of the gospel, while it sets before our eyes Christ crucified. Repentance is not arbitrary, but necessary; there is no being saved without it, Luke xiii. 3. 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' And we may be thankful to God, that he hath left us this plank after shipwreck.

(1.) I shall shew the counterfeits of repentance.

1. Natural softness and tenderness of spirit. Some have a tender affection, arising from their complexion, whereby they are apt to weep and relent when they see any object of pity. These are not repenting tears; for many weep to see another's misery, who cannot weep at their own sin.

2. Counterfeit, Legal affrightments. A man hath lived in a course of sin; at last he is made a little sensible, he sees hell ready to devour him, and he is filled with anguish and horror; but, within a while the tempest of conscience is blown over, and he is quiet: then he concludes he is a true penitent, because he hath felt some bitterness in sin: this is not repentance. Judas had some trouble of mind. If anguish and trouble were sufficient to repentance, then the damned would be most penitent, for they are most in anguish of mind. There may be trouble of mind, where there is no grieving for the offence against God.

3. Counterfeit, a slight superficial sorrow. When God's hand lies heavy upon a man (he is sick or lame) he may vent a sigh or tear, and say, Lord, have mercy; yet this is no true repentance. Ahab did more than all this, 1 Kings xxi. 27. 'He rent his clothes, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.' His clothes were rent, but not his heart. The eye may be watery, and the heart flinty. An apricock may be soft without, but it hath an hard stone within.

4. Counterfeit, Good motions arising in the heart. Every good motion is not repentance. Some think, if they have motions in their hearts to break off their sins, and become religious, this is repentance. As the devil may stir up bad motions in the godly, so the Spirit of God may stir up good motions in the wicked. Herod had many good thoughts, and inclinations stirred up in him by John Baptist's preaching, yet he did not truly repent for he still lived in incest.

5. Counterfeit, vows, and resolutions. What vows and solemn protestations do some make in their sickness, if God recovered them they will be new men, but afterwards are as bad as

ever ! Jer. ii. 20. 'Thou saidst, I will not transgress ; here was a resolution : but for all this she ran after her idols ; ' Under every green tree thou wandereft, playing the harlot.

6. Counterfeit, Leaving off some gross sin. But this is a mistake, for, (1.) A man may leave some sins, and keep others. Herod did reform many things amiss, but kept his Herodias. (2.) An old sin may be left, to entertain a new. A man may leave off riot and prodigality, and turn covetous ; this is to exchange a sin. These are the counterfeits of repentance. Now, if you find that your's is a counterfeit repentance, and you have not repented aright, mend what you have done amiss : as in the body, if a bone be set wrong, the chirurgion hath no way but to break it again, and set it aright : so must you do by your repentance ; if you have not repented aright, you must have your heart broken again in a godly manner, and be more deeply afflicted for sin than ever. And that brings me to the second, to shew wherein true repentance consists : it consists in two things ;

1<sup>st</sup> Humiliation ; Lev. xxvi. 41. 'If their uncircumcised hearts be humbled.' There is (as the schoolmen) a twofold humiliation, or breaking of the heart. 1. Attrition ; as when a rock is broken in pieces ; This is done by the law, which is an hammer to break the heart. 2. Contrition ; as when ice is melted into water. This is done by the gospel, which is as a fire to 'melt the heart,' Jer. xxiii. 9. It is the sense of abused kindness causeth contrition.

2<sup>dly</sup>, 'Transformation, or change, Rom. xii. 2. 'Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.' Repentance works a change in the whole man : as wine put into a glass where water is, the wine runs into every part of the water, and changeth its colour and taste ; so true repentance doth not rest in one part, but diffuse and spread itself into every part.

1. Repentance causeth a change in the mind. Whereas, before a man did like well of sin, and say in defence of it, as Jonah, 'I did well to be angry,' chap. ii. 9. So, I did well to swear, and break the sabbath. When once a man becomes a penitent, his judgment is changed, he now looks upon sin as the greatest evil. The Greek word for repentance, signifies after-wisdom ; when, having seen how deformed and damnable a thing sin is, we change our mind. Paul, before conversion, verily thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus, Acts xxvi. 9. But, when he became a penitent, now he was of another mind, Phil. iii. 8. 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.' Repentance causeth a change of judgment.

2. Repentance causeth a change in the affections, which move under the will as the commander in chief. Repentance doth

metamorphose the affections. It turns rejoicing in sin into sorrow for sin : it turns boldness in sin into holy shame : it turns the love of sin into hatred. ' As Amnon hated Tamar more than ever he loved her,' 2 Sam. xiii. 15. So the true penitent hated sin more than ever he loved it, Psal. cxix. 104. ' I hate every false way.'

3. Repentance works a change in the life. Tho' repentance begins at the heart, it doth not rest here, but goes into the life. I say, it begins at the heart, Jer. iv. 14. ' O Jerusalem, wash thy heart.' If the spring be corrupt, there can no pure stream run from it. But tho' repentance begins at the heart, it doth not rest there, but changeth the life. What a change did repentance make in Paul ! it changed a persecuter into a preacher. What a change did it make in the jailer ? Acts xvi. 33. He took the apostles, and washed their stripes, and set meat before them. What a change did it make in Mary Magdalene ? She that before did kiss her lovers with wanton embraces, now kisseth Christ's feet ; she that did use to curl her hair, and dress it with costly jewels, now she makes it a towel to wipe Christ's feet : her eyes that used to sparkle with lust, and with impure glances to entice her lovers, now she makes them a fountain of tears to wash her Saviour's feet : her tongue, that used to speak vainly and loosely, now it is an instrument set in tune to praise God. And this change of life hath two things in it ;

(1.) The *terminus a quo*, a breaking off sin, Dan. iv. 27. ' Break off thy sins by righteousness.' And this breaking off sin must have three qualifications ; 1. It must be universal, a breaking off all sin. One disease may kill as well as more, one sin lived in may damn, as well as more. The real penitent breaks off secret, gainful complexion sins : he takes the sacrificing knife of mortification, and runs it through the heart of his dearest lusts. 2. Breaking off sin must be sincere : it must not be out of fear or design, but upon spiritual grounds : as 1st, From antipathy and disgust.

2dly, From a principle of love to God. If sin had not such evil effects, yet a true penitent would forsake it out of love to God. The best way to separate things that are frozen, is by fire. When sin and the heart are frozen together, the best way to separate them is by the fire of love. Shall I sin against a gracious Father, and abuse that love which pardons me ? 3dly, The breaking of sin must be perpetual, so as never to have to do with sin any more, Hos. xiv. 8. ' What have I to do any more with idols ?' Repentance is a spiritual divorce, which must be till death.

(2.) Change of life hath in it *terminus ad quem*, a returning unto the Lord : it is called ' repentance towards God.' Acts xx. 21. 'Tis not enough when we repent, to leave old sins :



but we must engage in God's service : as when the wind leaves the west it turns into a contrary corner. The repenting prodigal did not only leave his harlots, but did arise and go to his father, Luke xxv. 8. In true repentance the heart points directly to God, as the needle to the North-pole.

*Use.* Let us all set upon this great work of repentance ; let us repent sincerely and speedily : let us repent of all our sins, our pride, rash anger, unbelief. ' Without repentance no remission ; ' It is not consistent with the holiness of God's nature, to pardon a sinner while he is in the act of rebellion. O meet God, not with weapons, but tears in your eyes. And, to stir you up by a melting, penitent frame.

1. Consider, what is there in sin, that you should continue in the practice of it ? It is the ' accursed thing,' Josh. vii. 11. It is the spirits of mischief distilled. (1.) It defiles the soul's glory ; it is like a stain to beauty : ' tis compared to a plague-sore, 1 Kings viii. 38. Nothing so changeth one's glory into shame, as sin. (2.) Without repentance, sin tends to final damnation. *Peccatum transit actus manet reatu.*—Sin at first shews its colour in the glass, but afterwards it bites like a serpent, Those locusts, Rev. ix. 7. were an emblem of sin : ' On their heads were crowns like gold, and they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions, and there were stings in their tails.' Sin unrepented of, ends in a tragedy. Sin hath the devil for its father, shame for its companion, and death for its wages, Rom. vi. 23. What is there in sin then, that men should continue in it ? Say not, it is sweet : who would desire that pleasure which kills ?

2. Repentance is very pleasing to God ; no sacrifice like a broken heart, Ps. li. 17. ' A contrite and a broken heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' St. Austin causeth this sentence to be written over his bed when he was sick. ' When the widow brought empty vessels to Elisha, the oil was poured into them,' 2 Kings iv. 6. ' Bring God the broken vessel of a contrite heart, and he will power in the oil of mercy. Repenting tears are the joy of God and angels, Luke xv. Doves delight to be about the waters ; and surely God's Spirit (who once descended in the likeness of a dove) takes great delight in the waters of repentance. Mary stood at Jesus' feet weeping, Luke vii. 38. She brought two things to Christ, tears and ointment ; her tears were more precious to Christ than her ointment.

3. Repentance ushers in pardon ; therefore they are joined together, Acts v. 31. ' Repentance and remission.' Pardon of sin is the richest blessing ; it is enough to make a sick man well, Isa. xxxiii. 24. ' The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick ; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.' Pardon settles upon us the rich charter of the promises. Par-

doing mercy is the sauce that makes all other mercies relish the sweeter; it sweetens our health, riches, honour. David had a crown of pure gold set upon his head, Pf. xxi. 3. But that which David did most bless God for, was not that God had set a crown of gold upon his head, but that God set a crown of mercy upon his head, Pf. ciii. 4. 'Who crowneth thee with mercies.' But what was this crown of mercy? you may see, ver. 3. 'Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.' David more rejoiced that he was crowned with forgiveness, than that he wore a crown of pure gold. Now, what is it makes way for pardon of sin, but repentance? When David's soul was humbled and broken, then the prophet Nathan brought him that good news, 2 Sam. xii. 13. 'The Lord hath put away thy sin.'

Obj. *But sure, my sins are so great, that if I should repent, God would not pardon them.*

Ans. God will not go from his promise, Jer. iii. 12. 'Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful.' If thy sins are as rocks, yet, upon thy repentance, the sea of God's mercy can drown these rocks, Isa. i. 19. 'Wash ye, make ye clean.' Wash in the laver of repentance, ver. 18. 'Come now, and let us reason, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' Manassah was a crimson sinner; but, when he humbled himself greatly, the golden sceptre of mercy was held forth; when his head was a fountain to weep for sin, Christ's sides was a fountain to wash away sin. 'Tis not the greatness of sin, but impenitency, destroys. The Jews, some of them, that had an hand in crucifying Christ, upon their repentance, the blood they shed was a sovereign balm to heal them. When the prodigal came home to his father, he had the robe and the wring put upon him, and his 'father kissed him,' Luke xv. If you break off your sins, God will become a friend to you: all that is in God shall be yours; his power shall be yours, to help you; his wisdom shall be yours, to counsel you; his spirit shall be yours, to sanctify you; his promises shall be yours, to comfort you; his angels shall be yours, to guard you; his mercy shall be yours to save you.

4. There's much sweetness in repenting tears. The soul is never more enlarged and inwardly delighted, than when it can melt kindly for sin. Weeping days are festival days. The Hebrew word to repent, *Nicham*, signifies *consolari*, 'to take comfort,' John xvi. 21. 'Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.' Christ turns the water of tears into wine. David, who was the great mourner in Israel, was the sweet singer; and the joy a true penitent finds, is a prelibation and foretaste of the joy of paradise. The wicked man's joy turns to sadness; the penitent's sadness turns to joy. Though repentance seems at

first to be thorny and bitter, yet of this thorn a Christian gathers grapes. All which considerations may open a vein of godly sorrow in our souls, that we may both weep for sin, and turn from sin, if ever God restores comfort, it is to his mourners, Isa. lvii. 18. And when we have wept, let us look up to Christ's blood for pardon: say, as that holy man, *lava Domine lacrymas meas*.—"Lord, wash my tears in thy blood." We drop sin with our tears, and need Christ's blood to wash them: and this repentance must not be only for a few days, like the mourning for a friend, which is soon over; but it must be the work of our lives: the issue of godly sorrow must not be stopt till death. After sin is pardoned, we must repent. We run afresh upon the score, "we sin daily, therefore must repent daily." Some shed a few tears for sin; and, when their tears, like the widow's oil, have run a while they cease. Many, if the plaister of repentance begin to smart a little, pluck it off; whereas this plaister of repentance must still lie on, and not be plucked off till death, when as all other tears, so these of godly sorrow, shall be wiped away.

Qu. *What shall we do to obtain a penitential frame of heart?*

Ans. Seek to God for it: It is his promise to give an 'heart of flesh,' Ezek. xxxvi. and to 'pour on us a spirit of mourning,' Zech. xii. 10. Beg God's 'holy Spirit,' Pf. cxlvii. 18. 'He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.' When the wind of God's Spirit blows upon us, then the waters of repentant tears will flow from us.

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## THE WORD READ AND PREACHED, HOW EFFECTUAL?

III. THE third way to escape the wrath and curse of God and obtain the benefit of redemption by Christ, is, 'The diligent use of ordinances:' in particular the "word, sacraments and prayer."

1. I begin with the first of these ordinances,

I. The 'word,' 1 Thess. ii. 13.—'which effectually worketh in you that believe.'

Qu. *What is meant by the words working effectual?*

Ans. The word of God is said to work effectually, when it hath good effect upon us for which it was appointed of God; namely, when the word works powerful illumination, and thorough reformation, Acts xxvi. 18. 'To open their eyes, and turn them from the power of Satan to God.' The 'opening their eyes,' denotes illumination; and, 'turning them from Satan to God,' denotes reformation.



Qu. 2. *How is the word to be read and heard that it may become effectual to salvation?*

This question consists of two branches.

1. *How may the word be read effectually?*

*First*, I shall begin with the first branch of the question, ‘How is the word to be read that it may be effectual to salvation?’

*Ans.* That we may so read the word, that it may conduce effectually to our salvation :

1. Let us have a reverend esteem of every part of canonical scripture, Ps. cxix. 10. ‘More are they to be desired than gold.’ Value this book of God above all other books; it is a golden epistle, endited by the Holy Ghost, sent us from heaven. More particularly, to raise our esteem, (1.) The scripture is a spiritual glass, to dress our souls by; it shews us more than we can see by the light of a natural conscience: that may discover gross sins; but the glass of the word shews us heart-sins, vain thoughts unbelief, &c. And it not only shews us our spots, but washeth them away. (2.) The scripture is a magazine, out of which we may fetch our spiritual artillery to fight against Satan. When the devil tempted our Saviour, he fetched armour and weapons from scripture, ‘it is written,’ Matth. iv. 4, 7. (3.) The holy scripture is a *panacea*, or universal medicine for the soul; it gives a receipt to cure deadness of heart, Psal. cxix. 50. Pride, 1 Pet. v. 5. Infidelity, John iii. 36. It is a physic garden, where we may gather an herb or antidote to expel the poison of sin. The leaves of scripture like the leaves of the tree of life, are for the ‘healing of the nations,’ Rev. xxii. 2. And may not this cause a reverend esteem of the word?

2. If we would have the word written effectual to our souls, let us peruse it with “intensesness of mind,” John v. 39. ‘Search the scriptures.’ The Greek word [*erynate*] signifies to search as for a “vein of silver.” The Bereans, Acts xvii. ‘searched the scriptures daily.’ The word [*anakrimentes*] “signifies to make a curious and critical search.” And Apollos was mighty in the scriptures, Acts xviii. 24. Some gallop over a chapter in haste and get no good by it: if we would have the word effectual and saving, we must mind and observe every passage of scripture. And that we may be diligent in the perusal of scripture, consider,

*First*, The word written is *norma cultus*, the rule and platform by which we are to square our lives; it contains in it all things needful to salvation, Ps. xix. 7. what duties we are to do, what sins we are to avoid. God gave Moses a pattern how he would have the tabernacle made, and he was to go exactly according to the pattern, Exod. xxv. 9. The word is the pat-

tern God hath given us in writing, for modelling our lives; therefore, how careful should we be in the perusing and looking over this pattern?

*Secondly*, The written word, as it is our pattern, so it will be our judge, John xii. 48. 'The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day.' We read of the 'opening of the books,' Rev. xx. 12. 'This is one book God will open, the book of the scripture and will judge men out of it; he will say, have you lived according to the rule of this word? The word hath a double work, to teach, and to judge.'

3. If we would have the word written effectual, we must bring faith to the reading of it: believe it to be the word of the eternal Jehovah. 'The word written comes with authority, it shews its commission from heaven, 'Thus saith the Lord.'—It is of divine inspiration, 2 Tim. iii. 16. The oracles of scripture must be surer to us than a voice from heaven, 1 Pet. i. 18. Unbelief enervates the virtue of scripture, and renders it ineffectual. First, men question the truth of the scripture and then fall away from it.

4. If we would have the word written effectual to salvation, we must delight in it as our spiritual cordial, Jer. xv. 16. 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart.' All true solid comfort is fetched out of the word. The word (as Chrysostom saith) is a spiritual garden: and the promises are the fragrant flowers or spices in this garden. How should we delight to walk upon these beds of spices? is it not a comfort in all dubious perplexed cases, to have a counsellor to advise us? Ps. cxix. 24. 'Thy testimonies are my counsellors.' Is it not a comfort to find our evidences for heaven? and where should we find them but in the word? 1 Thess. i. 4, 5. The word written is a sovereign elixir or comfort in an hour of distress, Ps. cxix. 50. 'This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me.' It can turn all our 'water into wine.' How should we take a great complacency and delight in the word! They only who come to the word with delight, go from it with success.

5. If we would have the scripture effectual and saving, we must be sure, when we have read the word, to hide it in our hearts, Ps. cxix. 11. 'Thy word have I hid in my heart.' The word, locked up in the heart, is a preservative against sin. Why did David hide the word in his heart? In the next words, 'That I might not sin against thee.' As one would carry an antidote about him when he comes near a place infected; so David carried the word in his heart, as a sacred antidote to preserve him from the infection of sin. When the sap is hid in the root, it makes the branches fruitful, when the seed is hid in the

ground, then the corn springs up, so, when the word is hid in the heart then it brings forth good fruit.

6. If we would have the word written effectual, let us labour not only to have the light of the word in our heads, but the power of the word in our hearts. Let us endeavour to have the word copied out, and written a second time in our hearts, Pf. xxxvii. 32. 'The law of God is in his heart.' The word faith, 'Be cloathed with humility,' 1 Pét. v. 5. Let us be low and humble in our own eyes. The word calls for sanctity; 'Let us labour to partake of the divine nature, and to have something conceived in us which is of the holy Ghost,' 2 Pet. i. 4. When the word is thus copied out in our hearts, and we are changed into the similitude of it, now the word written is made effectual to us, and becomes a favour of life.

7. & *ult.* When we read the holy scriptures let us look up to God for a blessing: beg the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that we may see the 'deep things of God,' Eph. i. 17. Pray to God that the same Spirit that wrote the scripture would enable us to understand it: Pray that God will give us that 'favour of knowledge,' 2 Cor. ii. 14. that we may relish a sweetness in the word we read. David tasted it 'sweeter than the honey-comb,' Pf. xix. 10. Let us pray that God will not only give us his word as a rule of holiness, but his grace as a principle of holiness.

*2d Branch of the 2d. Question. How may we so hear the word, that it may be effectual and saving to our souls?*

*Ans.* 1. Give great attention to the word preached; let nothing pass without taking special notice of it, Luke xix. 48. 'All the people were very attentive to hear him, they hanged upon his lip. Acts xvi. 14. 'Lydia a seller of purple, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul.' Give attention to the word, as to a matter of life and death: and, to that purpose have a care, (1.) To banish vain impertinent thoughts, which will distract you, and take you off from the work in hand. These fowls will be coming to the sacrifice, Gen. xv. 11. therefore we must drive them away. An archer may take a right aim: but if one stand at his elbow, and jog him when he is going to shoot, he will not hit the mark: Christians may have good aims in hearing; but take heed of impertinent thoughts which will jog and hinder you in God's service. (2.) Banish dullness. The devil gives many hearers a sleepy sop, they cannot keep their eyes open at a sermon: they eat so much on a Lord's day, that they are fitter for the pillow and couch, than the temple. Frequent and customary sleeping at a sermon, shews high contempt and irreverence of the ordinance: it gives a bad example to others; it makes your sincerity to be



called in question ; it is the devil's seed-time, Matth. xiii. 25. ' While men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares.' Oh shake off drowsiness, as Paul shook off the viper ! Be serious and attentive in hearing the word, Deut. xxxii. 47. ' For it is not a vain thing for you, it is your life.' When people do not mind what God speaks to them in his word, God doth as little mind what they say to him in prayer.

2. If you would have the word preached effectual, come with an holy appetite to the word, 1 Pet. ii. 2. ' The thirsting soul is the thriving soul. In nature, one may have an appetite and no digestion ; but it is not so in religion : where there is a great appetite to the word, there is for the most part digestion, the word doth concoct and nourish. Come with hungerings of soul after the word : and therefore desire the word, that it may not only please you, but profit you. Look not more at the garnishing of the dish than the meat, at eloquence and rhetoric more than solid matter. It argues both a wanton palate, and surfeited stomach, to feed on fallads and kickshaws, rather than wholesome food.

3. If you would have the preaching of the word effectual, come to it with a tenderneſs upon your heart, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9. ' Because thy heart was tender.' If we preach to hard hearts, it is like shooting against a brazen wall, the word doth not enter : it is like setting a gold seal upon marble, which takes no impression. Oh come to the word preached with a melting frame of heart ! it is the melting wax receives the stamp of the seal : when the heart is in a melting frame, it will better receive the stamp of the word preached : when Paul's heart was melted and broken for sin, then ' Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? ' Acts ix. 6. Come not hither with hard hearts : who can expect a crop when the seed is sown upon stony ground ?

4. If you would have the word effectual, receive it with meekneſs, James i. 21. ' Receive with meekneſs the ingrafted word.' Meekneſs is a submissive frame of heart to the word, a willingness to hear the counsels and reproofs of the word. Contrary to this meekneſs, is, (1.) Fierceneſs of spirit, whereby men are ready to rise up in rage against the word. Proud men, and guilty, cannot endure to hear of their faults. Proud Herod put John in prison, Mark xii. 12. The guilty Jews being told of their crucifying Christ, stoned Stephen, Acts ix. 59. To tell men of sin, is to hold a glass to one that is deformed, who cannot endure to see his own face. (2.) Contrary to meekneſs is stubbornneſs of heart, whereby men are resolved to hold fast their sins, let the word say what it will, Jer. xlv. 16. ' We will burn incense to the queen of heaven.' Oh take heed of this ! if you would have the word preached work effectually, lay aside fierceneſs and stubbornneſs, receive the word with

meekness. By meekness the word preached comes to be ingrafted. As a good scion that is grafted in a bad stock, doth change the nature of the fruit, and make it taste sweet ; so when the word comes to be ingrafted into the soul, it sanctifies it, and makes it bring forth the sweet fruit of righteousness.

5. Mingle the word preached with faith, Heb. iv. 2. ‘ The word preached profited not, not being mixed with faith.’ If you leave out the chief ingredient in a medicine, it hinders the operation ; do not leave out this ingredient of faith. Believe the word, and so believe it as to apply it. When you hear Christ preached, apply him to yourselves ; this is to put on the Lord Jesus, Rom. xiii. 14. when you hear a promise spoken of, apply it ; this is to suck the flower of the promise, and turn it to honey.

6. Be not only attentive in hearing, but retentive after hearing, Heb. ii. 1. ‘ We ought to give the more diligent heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we let them slip.’ Lest we should let them run out, as water out of a sieve : if the ground doth not retain the seed sown into it, there can be no good crop. Some have memories like leaking vessels, the sermons they hear, are presently gone, and then there is no good done. If meat doth not stay and concoct on the stomach, it will not nourish. Satan labours to steal the word out of our mind, Mark iv. 15. ‘ When they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown.’ Our memories should be like the chest of the ark wherein the law was put.

7. Reduce your hearing to practice ; live on the sermons you hear, Psal. cxix. 166. ‘ I have done thy commandments.’ Rachel was not content that she was beautiful, but her desire was to be fruitful. What is a knowing head without a fruitful heart ! Phil. i. 11. ‘ Filled with the fruits of righteousness.’ It is obedience crowns hearing ; that hearing will never save the soul, which doth not reform the life.

8. Beg of God that he will accompany his word with his presence and blessing. The Spirit must make all effectual : ministers may prescribe physic, but it is God’s Spirit must make it work. “ He hath his pulpit in heaven that converts souls,” Austin. Acts x. 44. ‘ While Peter was speaking, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard. It is said, the alchymist can draw oil out of iron. God’s spirit can produce grace in the most obdurate heart.

9. If you would have the word work effectually to your salvation, make it familiar to you, discourse of the word you have heard when you come home, Ps. cxix. 172. ‘ My tongue shall speak of thy word.’ That may be one reason why some people get no more good by what they hear, because they never speak



one to another of what they have heard : as if sermons were such secrets, that they must not be spoken of again ; or as if it were a shame to speak of matters of salvation, Mal. iii. 16. ‘ They that feared the Lord spake often one to another and a book of remembrance was written.’

*Use. Caution.* Take heed, as you love your souls, that the word become not ineffectual to you. There are some to whom the word preached is ineffectual. (1.) Such as censure the word ; instead of judging themselves judge the word. (2.) Such as live in contradiction to the word, Isa. xxx. 8. (3.) Such as are more hardened by the word, Zech. vii. 11. ‘ They made their hearts as an adamant.’ And when men harden their hearts wilfully, God hardens them judicially, Isa. vii. 8. ‘ Make their ears heavy.’ The word to these is ineffectual : were it not sad, if a man’s meat should not nourish ; nay, if it should turn to poison ? Oh ! take heed that the word preached be not ineffectual and to no purpose. Consider three things.

(1.) If the word preached doth us no good there is no other way by which we can be saved. This is God’s institution, and the main engine he useth to convert souls, Luke xvi. 31. ‘ If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded tho’ one rose from the dead.’ If an angel should come to you out of heaven, and preach of the excellency of the glorified estate, and the joys of heaven, and that in the most pathetic manner ; if the word preached doth not persuade, neither would you be wrought upon by such an oration from heaven. If a damned spirit should come from hell, and preach to you in flames, and tell you what a place hell is, and roar out the torments of the damned, it might make you tremble, but it would not convert, if the preaching of the word would not do it.

(2.) To come to the word, and not be savingly wrought upon, is that which the devil is pleased with ; he cares not though you hear frequently, if it be not effectually : he is not an enemy to hearing, but profiting. Though the minister holds out the breasts of the ordinances to you, he cares not as long as you do not suck the sincere milk of the word. The devil cares not how many sermon-pills you take, so long as they do not work upon your conscience.

(3.) If the word preached be not effectual to men’s conversion, it will be effectual to their condemnation : the word will be effectual one way or other ; if it doth not make your hearts better, it will make your chains heavier. We pity them who have not the word preached, but it will be worse with them who are not sanctified by it : dreadful is their case, who go laden to hell with sermons. But I will conclude with the apostle, Heb. vi. 9. ‘ I am persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation.’







